

National Seminar on **Women and Mining** in India



Organised by
mines, minerals & PEOPLE (mm&P)

25-04-03 and 26-04-03

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**National Seminar on
Women and Mining in India
A Report**

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Organised by
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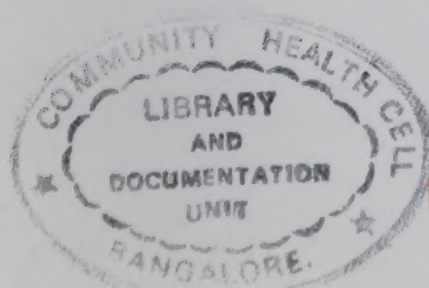
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We Dedicate this Report to

All the Women and child mineworkers, women and children in communities displaced, affected, suffering and struggling from the exploitation by mining in India. We hope this report will be useful to all our member groups and others concerned to understand the struggles against mining exploitation from a gender perspective.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Adivasi : Local Term used for describing the Tribal people.

PESA Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) ACT 1996 : An Act to provide for the extension of the provisions of Part IX of the Constitution relating to the Panchayats to the Scheduled Areas.

Schedule Area : Scheduled Areas are predominantly tribal areas administered under special provisions under a separate schedule, namely the Fifth Schedule of the Indian Constitution.

Fifth Schedule : The Fifth Schedule of the Constitution of India deals with administration and control of scheduled areas and scheduled tribes in these areas.

Environment Protection Act (EPA) : the EPA 1986 was enacted under the provisions of Art 253 of the Indian Constitution as a general legislation for environmental protection and to take all such measures as deems necessary or expedient for the purpose of protecting and improving the quality of the environment and preventing, controlling and abating environmental pollution.

Samatha Judgment : Supreme Court of India delivered a historic judgment in July 1997 declaring that all lands leased to private mining companies in the scheduled areas are null and void. . The judgment stating that transfer of land in Scheduled Area by way of lease to non-tribals, corporation aggregate, etc stands prohibited is a great reassurance of democratic space to all the 100 million Adivasi population in eight states having Fifth Scheduled areas.

Podu Cultivation : Podu cultivation is shifting or slash and burn cultivation is traditionally practiced by tribal people on the hill slopes.

Land Acquisition Act : The Land Acquisition Act 1894 states the circumstances and purposes for which the Central/State Government can acquire private land.

Gram Sabha : The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act defines Gram Sabha as a body consisting of persons registered in the electoral rolls to a village (or a group of villages) within the area of a Panchayat at the village (or a group of villages) level.

SEMINAR AGENDA

Theme : Impacts of Mining on Women

Day One : 9.30 A.M to 5.30 P.M, 25th April 2003

9.30 to 10.00 A.M Inaugural and Introduction

10.00 A.M to 1.00 P.M Pre Lunch Session

Sub Theme : Land, Livelihoods, Displacement and Socio-Cultural issues of Women in Mining

Key Issues :

Nature of problems related to displacement, loss of control over natural resources, the Land Acquisition process for mining, impacting women's rights and survival, examining mining and pre-mining livelihood issues from gender perspective and the wide range of socio-cultural issues related to gender as a result of mining. The session is intended to raise issues on legal rights of women over lands and natural resources, right to decision-making and to debate on sustainability of mining vis-à-vis women's livelihoods and human rights

Speakers

Resource Persons : Usha Ramnathan, Ramnika Gupta,

Struggle Group Presentations : Indu Netam, Durga Jha

2.00 P.M to 5.30 P.M Post Lunch Session

Sub Theme : Women in Mining Struggles

Key Issues

Identifies areas of invisibility of gender issues and women's participation in mining struggles, analyzing women's struggle needs in different mine cycles and examining the present situation of women's resistance to mining, women and corporate engagement, women fighting for rights in existing mines, women's struggles after mine closure and need for sensitization of communities, struggle groups, advocacy groups, trade unions, legislative and judicial bodies.

Speakers

Resource Persons : Ashim Roy

Struggle Groups : CASS, Srujana, Goa, Adivasi Manch,

Day Two : 9.30 A.M to 5.30 P.M, 26th April 2003

Theme : Emerging Issues and Struggles of Gender and Mining

9.30. A.M to 1.00 P.M

Pre Lunch

Sub Theme : Labour and Health Issues of Women in Mining

Key Issues :

Examines women's participation in mine labour, implications of privatization and mechanization in mining on women workers, new economic policy and gender issues in mine labour, women's position in existing and abandoned mines, comparative analysis of gender situations in traditional agrarian economies vis-à-vis mining economies. The session of health raises problems of health hazards of women in communities and in the mine-pits, corporate accountability to environment and health issues and identifying policy and legal issues on women's health in mining

Speakers

Resource Persons : J. John, (Women Mine Workers in India)
Dr.T.K. Joshi, Dr. S.K. Dave, Dr. Quemur Rehman,
Dr. Nitish Priyadarshi (Health Impacts)

Struggle Groups Presentations : Mine Labour Protection Campaign (MLPC),
Santulan, JOAR, Nari Surakhya Samithi

2.00 P.M to 5.30 P.M : Post Lunch

Sub Theme: Alternatives & Gender Perspectives Issues for Policies and Grass-roots struggles in Mining

Key Issues:

This session will draw on the sharing of information and experiences of earlier sessions to raise policy issues for seeking alternatives to achieving gender justice within and without mining and identifying areas for lobby and intervention from grass-roots to national platforms.

Speakers : Sunita Dubey, Dr. R. Sreedhar, Anil Choudhary

Introduction

Mr. Sreedhar Ramamurthy

Mr. Sreedhar, Convenor of the New Delhi Centre of *mines, minerals & PEOPLE (mm&P)* gave the inaugural address at the seminar. He gave an introduction to mm&P, the need for its existence and its activities. Drawing on the history of mm&P, he said that mm&P came out of a necessity of several struggle groups, scattered all over the country, to come together as a common platform and address mining related issues. Further, the local struggle groups were unaware of the problems in the rest of the country. A need was also felt to build their strength and capacities and thus mm&P came into existence. What emerged over the last four years is that there are more than 150 community groups and organizations spread across 22 states that have been in constant touch, discussing issues, sharing experiences and creating a platform for lobbying. In this process there was also a focus on issues concerning “women and mining” and the emerging consensus that women are the most disadvantaged and exploited in mining areas.

In this light, it was felt that the various impacts of mining on women, have to be addressed at a national platform. This seminar aims to look at mining issues at a national level and lobby for gender justice in the mineral policies of the state.

Ms. Bhanumathi Kalluri

Ms. K. Bhanumati, bringing out the purpose of the seminar, explained the urgent need for a platform to address issues related to women and mining. She introduced the subject stating how mining is largely a masculine industry, insensitive to women's issues, that women have never been accepted in the mining economy. Mining invariably results in displacement of land, livelihood, and women are the most affected due to this loss of livelihood. Further, this is an industry which has the worst impacts on the health and environment of women in communities living around the mines and on women as workers in the mine-pits. She said that this was the first attempt by mm&P to look at the gender perspectives in mining and understand the problems of women affected, as part of communities and as workers and to create a platform for representatives from remote mining areas, fighting for gender justice, to share their problems and to make visible the voices of women in mining.



Declining Tribal Culture

Session - I

Land, Livelihoods, Displacement and Socio-Cultural issues Women in Mining

Background Paper

The horrors of land acquisition are experienced by mining affected communities in a similar manner or perhaps more severe in nature, than that of dams and other big projects. When mining leases are given, the immediate threat to local communities is displacement and land alienation, which are inevitable features, especially with regard to large-scale mining. Minerals are considered national resources and sub soil rights over lands belong to the state and not to the individual owners. The powers of eminent domain, which are enjoyed by the state while acquisition of lands for mining, positions local communities in totally helpless situations.

Although apparently, there are complex procedures for acquisition of lands and for obtaining mining leases for exploration, prospecting and extraction, in reality, mining projects are sanctioned more with the view of encouraging and catering to the interests of the mining industries rather than to protect the interests of the local communities and the rest of the natural resources which exist in a mining area apart from the minerals, as reflected in the New Mineral Policy of 1993. The shifting focus of India's economic reforms are reflected in the series of recommendations to the Mineral Policy as well as to push for amendments in other Acts which are related to mining activities like the Labour laws, the Coal Nationalisation Act, The Fifth Schedule, the Land Acquisition Act, the Forest Conservation Act, the Environment Protection Act, the PESA and others, shows an increasing disrespect of the state towards the rights of communities.

Livelihoods and Access to Natural Resources : Impact of Mining

In the context of gender positioning, mining has only multiplied the exploitation and degradation of women's rights with regard to land and livelihoods. Historically and also in the existing legal framework, women have no legal rights over lands or natural resources. There is an invisible distinction between rural and tribal women with regard to control over lands in traditional land based situations in mainstream India. Tribal women enjoy a greater social status with regard to control over resources. This ensures their active participation and decision-making with regard to land utilisation, agriculture and powers over cash flow in a tribal economy. This is enjoyed to a lesser extent by rural women in India. Yet, they have a distinct role in the agrarian society with regard to participation in agricultural work, livestock management, and access to common properties.

However, both rural and tribal women are completely alienated from these accesses and rights when the mines come. Testimonies of women from coal mining areas of Orissa (Talcher) show that displacement and loss of land were the most serious problems affecting their lives, as their link to livelihood, economic and social status, health and security all depended on land and forests.

Whenever villages have been displaced or affected, women have been forced out of their land based work and pushed into menial and marginalised forms of labour as maids and servants, as construction labourers or into prostitution, which are highly unorganised and socially humiliating.

Women displaced by mining, have lost the rights to cultivate their traditional crops, and forests being cut down for mining, they are unable to collect forest produce for consumption (food, fodder, medicines or ceremonial needs) or for sale. The cash flow that tribal and rural women have access to, by sale of forest produce and by breeding livestock, has disappeared. They are forced to walk miles away from their villages leaving behind their children, either to collect forest produce or find wage labour and have had to sell away all their cattle. In many situations there is seasonal migration leading to work insecurity, breaking up of family relations and exposing them to various social hazards.

Transformation of Roles and Rights

It has always been the men who received any form of rehabilitation either in cash or as employment which has led to complete 'idleness' in the economic sphere for women while they wait the whole day long, for their men to return from the mine-pits. When some of the men received employment, the women were forced to manage the land (some of those lands still left under their control), and agricultural activities on their own. In such situations, their drudgery has increased, and has led to situations of share-cropping and gradually to mortgaging of land.

Women from land-owning communities have been forced into wage labour, which is a socially and economically humiliating shift. Women are also forced into petty trades or other businesses but the social taboos of participation in these sectors, their lack of literacy or skills, exposes them to further exploitation in these trades.

Tribal communities, displaced multiple times by mining and other projects, have migrated to bordering states in search of land and forests. A very clear example is the migration of tribals from Orissa to the neighbouring state of Andhra Pradesh where the Khonds had to occupy lands high up on the hills or encroach onto forest lands at the risk of being harassed as 'criminals' by both revenue and forest departments. They have cut down vast stretches of forest for survival and are accused of practicing 'unsustainable' agriculture called 'podu' or 'jhum' (shifting cultivation). Women, old and young, have to keep moving with their little children due to displacement multiple times. Some of them who have settled closer to the tourist towns had to shift to construction work, petty trades or prostitution as a means of survival.

Land Acquisition : The Nuances of land grabbing

The Land Acquisition Act of India is draconian and obsolete and gives over-riding powers to the state to encroach onto people's lands for any 'public purpose' including mining. In most mining situations, communities become aware of projects only at the time of eviction when the bull-dozer is brought in, many a times with police presence. The public hearings are organised in a biased and almost discreet manner where the local administration, the statutory bodies for clearing the projects and the mining companies are in close collusion to ensure that there are no effective objections raised by the public. Most mining companies also operate on a deemed consent basis so that even without the mandatory clearances, mining operations are expanded beyond lease areas and periods. The 'public purpose' of a mining activity from a gender perspective and especially with regard to what the women in the communities stand to 'publicly' gain, is highly questionable.

As communities have no access to project information, they have to rely on the revenue officials or on the local politicians, to inform them of the extent of land proposed for occupation. In many cases lands and forests and common properties are acquired far more than sanctioned for the projects. This blatant violation was exposed in one of the mining projects of the Indian Rayon and Industries in the scheduled area of Andhra Pradesh where the area occupied by the company was greater than the area actually sanctioned as per the government order. It was only with the information gathered from government orders and circulars, which were unearthed by the local movement and by the Adivasi women who physically stopped the company from entering their lands, that prevented further encroachment by the company.

Land Acquisition, PESA and the Fifth Scheduled Areas

In most mining projects the Land Acquisition Act has been wielded to supersede the Fifth Schedule laws for acquiring Adivasi lands for mining until this was nullified by the Samatha Judgement. In Andhra Pradesh, the cancellation of all mining leases in the scheduled area has been the greatest relief for Adivasi women who have started cultivating, after years of having worked as wage labourers in their own lands.

After the enforcement of PESA, it is now compulsory for the lease applicants to obtain a NOC from the Gram Sabha. In states like Chattisgarh, where Adivasi women, in thousands, have valiantly protested against public sector mining projects like the NMDC Steel Plant in Nagarnar, they were brutally suppressed inspite of stark violations of the Land Acquisition procedures and the PESA Act. Here the Gram Sabha was never consulted and there were gross dereliction of duties and procedures by the authorities and the company with regard to obtaining consent and NOC's from the people. NMDC has denied any of the violations brought out by the National SC/ST Commission in its fact finding report on Nagarnar. On the other hand, it is forcibly evicting people from their lands and going ahead with the construction by intimidating the women against any democratic agitations. Several women and children were taken into custody for demonstrating against the Plant. In such situations, where is the public accountability towards women in the communities while acquiring lands for mining projects?

In some cases even where NOC's were obtained and due procedures were followed, the local communities have realized that they have not benefited from the projects. In many a situation, NOC's are obtained with false promises of employment and compensation none of which have any legal binding on the companies. In many sites, people's individual lands were not taken for mining but government or common lands have been acquired, where the permission of the communities or Gram Sabhas was deemed not to be necessary. These are lands which surround the villages where there are important natural resources that women lose access to once mining companies take over. The land acquisition officials are completely callous towards communities and more so with regard to women and despite serious violations in procedures, they are either oblivious to this or do not ensure that companies consult the communities adequately. This situation exists widely in Banswada and Dungarpur districts of Rajasthan where mining activities were undertaken for many years without any consultations with people.

In many Adivasi villages, people are not even aware of the PESA in order to demand for proper consultation or decision-making rights. In several instances, some of the Adivasi men are either called to the revenue offices or are assembled in one of the villages which is proposed to be affected by mining (in many a case those families who are not directly going to be displaced) are called for a 'consultation' and a Gram Sabha is supposed to have been convened. This is what took place in the recent land acquisition process followed by Sterlite Industries in Lanjigada, Orissa. No women have ever been 'consulted' even in this manner. On the other hand, local communities and human rights groups supporting the people are

being picked up by police and company goons. When women gathered in large numbers to protest against this high-handedness, the hired goons of the company have beaten up women in public in the presence of the police.

The National Mineral Policy does acknowledge that there is a lack of adequate contribution to economic development of the tribals due to mining and admits the need to involve them in mining projects besides giving them the first choice of mining in smaller mines. This, coupled with the Samatha Judgement which directed that only state owned companies or societies of tribals should undertake mining activities in the Scheduled Areas, appear to show a way for reducing the debate over tribal development vis-à-vis privatization, liberalization and divestment in mining.

Yet, the ground realities are that communities are not properly consulted and where they come forward to take up mining on their own, the state machinery, instead of providing an environment of promoting local initiatives, suppresses these by denying leases and frustrating them with intimidating procedures whereas private mining companies, particularly MNC's get leases with ease. A live example which stands out in this context is the Markatola Adivasi Khanij Utkanan Sramik Samiti in Kanker district of Chattisgarh which has atleast nine Adivasi women as members and has been pursuing for a mining lease since 1995. It has yet to get a prospecting licence.

The present trend of divestment offers a larger scope for women's exploitation. When it has become extremely difficult to make public sector mining industries socially accountable and just as was seen in Nagarnar, NALCO, Coal India Ltd and other projects where the local communities are still fighting for proper rehabilitation, it only multiplies the vulnerability of communities when private companies without a social mandate (other than self nominated codes) are increasingly taking over the mining sector. The land acquisition is done by the state machinery and the public sector company is then handed over to private and multinational companies. Typical examples are Sterlite Industries which took over BALCO and Rio Tinto Zinc which has a joint venture with Orissa Mining Corporation Ltd in Keonjhar.

In Chattisgarh some tribal lands in Khudaridih village are being acquired to provide the raw material for BALCO but after the Sterlite takeover, the promises made at the time of acquisition are being bounced between the government and the new private owners, neither of them taking responsibility for proper rehabilitation. Similarly, RTZ is supposed to have conducted an Environment Impact Assessment through the Delhi based TERI and claims that women have been consulted and will ensure respect for the rights of women from the communities in their project. Here, it becomes difficult to define consultation of women and on what grounds they have given their consent and what has been the basis of their information to give consent. It is also not clear how the state and the mining companies will ensure respect of women's rights in the absence of any statutory guidelines, laws and mechanisms.

The state's obstinacy to disinvest in the mining sector has serious consequences for Adivasi women in the Fifth Scheduled areas. The Divestment Ministry's lobbying for amendment to the Fifth Schedule in order to accommodate private mining activities is being pushed for at the judicial and parliamentary processes ignoring the protests of Adivasi communities. Mining is being done in sanctuaries and national parks, and in protected and ecologically fragile areas where women are prevented from collecting firewood or other NTFP on the pretext that they endanger the ecological wealth. These dichotomies have to be addressed by the state especially in the present context where there are moves towards large-scale forest evictions on the one hand and, where the state is contemplating the recommendations of international financial institutions like the World Bank who are lobbying for mining projects in these same forest regions. The schizophrenic approaches to gender participation and gender rights have to be critically weighed against our new concepts of development.

Relief and Rehabilitation

The country, to this day, does not have any Relief & Rehabilitation policy as a constitutional safeguard for people. There is no basis on which communities fight for compensation of their losses either of land or common properties or of livelihoods.

In most pre-mining situations in rural and tribal areas, land is a joint ownership of brothers and sons. The labour is jointly distributed and invested and the output is jointly enjoyed. The rehabilitation procedures followed so far in mining projects has proved that families are neutralized as jobs (if given) are extended only to one of the sons or brothers whose wages or income from the mines becomes his individual income and not shared with the rest of the joint family. This has thrown entire families into a state of poverty and lack of livelihoods, forcing them to migrate and break up social relationships. Monetary compensations are always wasted away in a short period leaving the families impoverished.

Rehabilitation has never addressed the need for women's livelihoods and land rights as it is only the family as a unit and the men in the family who are considered to be compensated for their loss of lands. Projects which have been set up decades ago, like the NALCO in Damanjodi (Orissa) have yet to complete their rehabilitation activities properly. As there is no policy on rehabilitation, this had been implemented from individual project to project basis where the nature of rehabilitation depended on the voluntary interest of the company and not on any set guidelines or rules.

Rehabilitation programmes taken up so far, have been entirely insensitive to gender concerns whether in providing land, housing, jobs or cash. Rehabilitated colonies provide no space for women needs for privacy, toilets, washing, domestic, health, recreation or educational facilities. Neither have these provided for taking up economic activities on their own as forests are too far away from the colonies, have no space for livestock rearing or for storage of forest produce. They have been implemented with complete disrespect for social relationships and cultural beliefs. The approach of both industries and governments towards communities with regard to rehabilitation has always been one of performing magnanimous favours than with a sense of duty or responsibility. Hence, gender needs have never been a priority in rehabilitation programmes.

The greatest impact of displacement due to mining has been the transformation of Adivasis from a close association and symbiosis with nature to culturally and ecologically degraded communities. With the degeneration of association from nature has been the degeneration in cultural values, ceremonies and social celebrations and common property management practices. Festivals have lost their significance as association is with mine-pits and not forests. The rich art and music heritage of adivasis has been lost to the influences of markets and external forces. So has been the degradation in their oral and traditional law and order systems in ensuring protection of forests and community relationships. These changes have had innumerable impacts on women social status and cultural roles.

A critical issue with regard to legal rights of Adivasi women over lands is the problem of 'benami' form of marriages. Adivasi women are lured into marriage by non tribal men even in non-mining situations, in order to enjoy rights to lands and properties. Land alienation in the many of the scheduled areas of Adivasi regions took place in this manner where the non-tribal families heap the rewards of the lands owned by the tribal woman who, on the other hand, remains a mere concubine. It is feared that if legal rights are provided for Adivasi women, over their lands, this could result in more land passing into the hands of non-tribals. This becomes an issue of serious conflict when fighting for women's rights to

rehabilitation and compensation. Especially in a mining situation, the infiltration of migrant labourers and non tribal populations into Adivasi regions, places women in more vulnerable situations.

Sustainable Mining - Sustainability of Gender Justice

The anticipated economic development from mining does not accrue to local communities and, on the contrary, reduces the women into worse forms of survival than pre-mining conditions. Hence, when companies and governments give projections of project costs and estimated profits, it is very important that these are analysed from the perspective of social and environment costs in order to assess their actual costs and benefits. This is especially crucial when valuing the extractive industry in terms of the production, processing, consumption and export needs of the country for each mineral and weighing these needs and values against the social and environment costs. This should define the basis on which mining projects are sanctioned and cleared where the country has a long term economic perspective of mining rather than on individual lobbying capacities of mining industries for 'sustenance' of their businesses. This is also very important when weighed from the viability of the projects if social costs are included as part of project costs and further when relief and rehabilitation are taken up in a truly socially just manner. Yet, no projects have ever been valued by the state taking into detailed consideration the direct and indirect impacts on communities and the extent of human abuse, deforestation, pollution and ecological destruction and where industries are bound by rules and guidelines to pay up for these costs.

Hence how do we value our minerals? If minerals were to be valued at the cost of exposing women and their bodies to abuse and exploitation and if protecting women's human rights is not a priority for defining our indices of human development, the sanctity of gender justice is completely endangered. Therefore, displacement, acquisition of lands, water bodies and forests, loss of livelihoods of women, atrocities and health hazards on them, transformation of villages into culturally degraded shanty towns, risks of disasters and mine accidents have to be evaluated in the entire project cost in order to determine whether a mining project is necessary against the other existing economic activities or possibilities of creating other forms of economic activities in each area proposed for mining. Unless the state takes up this exercise seriously, its commitment to communities and ecology and the very economic sustainability of the country stands under scrutiny.

If mining is the most crucial activity that has to be undertaken in a specific area, the state has to consciously provide for a proper plan of relief and rehabilitation which is acceptable to the communities affected and the land acquisition procedures have to ensure a complete EIA and EMP which is inclusive of compensating for women's livelihoods and development losses in a manner which enhances the existing social and economic situation rather than degrading it further. The state has to also ensure that the industries first implement complete relief and rehabilitation in the existing and abandoned projects before fresh leases are granted for mining more lands and displacing more people in the green field areas. This is the first step towards building the commitment of the industry and the state to being responsible for mining induced impacts.

Presentations

The first session explored the nature of problems related to displacement and its impacts. The session also intended to raise issues on legal rights of women over lands and natural resources, right to decision-making and to debate on sustainability of mining vis-à-vis women's livelihoods and human rights

Ms. Usha Ramanathan

The first speaker of this session, Ms. Usha Ramanathan is a law researcher and has extensively studied the legal aspects of displacement - land alienation, rehabilitation and compensation, communities' rights in the context of displacement and land alienation. She gave an overview of the legal and policy connotations of displacement, state interpretation of ownership of resources, state assessment of project costs and how these impact communities' loss of control and right to demand.

The issues in mining are similar to socio-economic issues related to displacement for other projects like dams. The issue of displacement has come to the forefront only in the past two decades. Till this time the displaced people were unaware of their rights and people were made to believe that such displacement was part of their lives, and that their sacrifices were required for the development of the nation. Hence, displacement was considered a part of the process of development, necessary for the economic prosperity of the nation, without providing for any alternatives.

Once the State decides that some people have to be displaced, the next question automatically raised is rehabilitation. Rehabilitation policies come in essentially to justify displacement. As the State does not have a right to take over the land, the rehabilitation policy provides an explanation for taking away the land. It is a tool and provides an explanation for displacement and demonstrates that the State is kind and concerned for the welfare of the people, and that it is making provisions to resettle the displaced.

The past 20 years is robust with experiences of displacement, how decisions are made about displacement, who gets displaced, how it happens, and what promises are made, etc. The past experiences clearly show that it is only when people fight, show resistance and demand for their rights, is rehabilitation ever talked about. Else it never exists. Also it is only in the past twenty years that any analysis has been made as to what displacement means to people and most importantly, whether displacement means anything at all?

Project related displacement - cost and benefits

Generally, project related displacement addresses the costs and benefits to the project. The methodology used for calculating the profitability to the project is calculating the costs and benefits to the project. The costs and losses caused due to the project just do not enter the calculation. i.e. what are calculated, as costs towards rehabilitation, are not all the losses that are sustained in the process of displacement or negotiating for a new project. If the losses are not accounted, then it is not a correct representation of all the costs accruing to the project. Invariably, the losses that get completely cut out of any kind of consideration are the losses sustained by women. There are costs and benefits to the project and hardly any benefits to the people, only losses.

The question is, what are the costs the project has to pay, for the benefits the project wants, and not benefits for the people. There are costs the project bears and losses the people bear. The essential difference

lies in this. If all the losses are not calculated, then the cost to the project is minimized. The constant exercise that the companies or the government engage in is to minimize costs to the project. All of rehabilitation policy calculates the costs and benefits for the project and not losses of the people.

Costs are calculated on the basis of regenerative resources and income replacement. These are the two basic things that are compensated. In project related displacement, including mining, any area where the state wants to take over possession of land, the dialogue for compensation is in terms of what the affected people have to give up. What is tangible in terms of land has to be compensated and over the years it has been recognized that the livelihood emerging from the land too has to be compensated. What gets left out are all the other aspects of life, of income potential, subsistence potential, which does not amount to a person being a claimant.

The other aspect to displacement is the state's assertion of its rights as an owner and its argument that even if people have the right to land, they do not have rights to what lies under the land. And as minerals lie under the land, people don't have a right to these resources. It is only the state that has the right to access these resources and the right to decide what to do with it. Implying, to reach those resources, it can take land from people. This is the second huge problem we are confronted with. The state is increasingly acting as owner of land, despite people asserting their right over their land. They are taking land for public purpose and not using it for that purpose at all. The issue here is not for safeguarding public interest but that of State exercising ownership of land. The fundamental issue here is the basis on which the State is exercising its rights over the resources.

The other problem is that when a project is in negotiation, all the losses are not recognized. By the time the struggle groups recognize the actual losses and what displacement has done to them, the compensations, negotiations are already calculated and majority of the losses not accounted for. Typically this is what happens in any rehabilitation process. If there is no pre-recognition of losses then asserting that these constitute losses and that it has to be built into the costs becomes very difficult. In this process women are increasingly marginalized where their losses due to displacement are realized only much later, and at times even after the rehabilitation process. For example, what it costs for a woman and her family to move is never ever considered or enter the calculations. The inevitable impact of displacement among people who are already marginalized is impoverishment. The displacement mechanism does not recognize the burden of displacement at all.

After much debate over the issue of displacement it has been recognized and accepted "land for land" as compensation. But it is always the men who decide the type of compensation. Women have demanded land for land compensation, as men use the cash compensation for their own purposes. There is no legal right for the women's position to be even considered. This does not even exist in the agenda of the State. It is only the struggles that have to bring this into the agenda. As the law stands today, it is very easy to get marginalized. Even in the case of compensation by way of employment, it is one job per family, the men who get the jobs, and often women give away theirs for the men. The economic potential of women, which gives her a status in her family and community is destroyed in this process and is not recognized. In any negotiation, these have to be factored in. The fact that there are some classes of persons, some categories of persons who get left out have to be taken into account. This is increasingly occurring in mining related cases.

Despite the Constitution providing special protection to the tribals especially in scheduled areas, the tampering with law often occurs in the economic interest of the State in exploiting the resources. The general cynicism and belief of the state that it can exert its power has encouraged this process of displacement.

Mine Closure

Huge amount of resources goes into surveys, availability of mines, while after the mining operations, the mines are left abandoned without any effort to close it and make it safer for people. The costs involved in closing mines are not calculated in the project costs at all. These have to be negotiated at the time of land acquisition and commencement of the project. This is the only way to bring about accountability in the whole process. Further, as the law stands today, the concept of restoring land does not exist at all.

Conclusion

This struggle for people's rights in displacement is at a much higher level, it is a fight against the state machinery, which does not recognize the existence of the marginalized. The struggle groups have to lobby towards bringing about relevant changes in the law and the need for state to recognize the rights of women in issues of displacement and rehabilitation. There are instances where mining has been stopped due to environmental reasons and land restoration has been done. Where the government has felt that environment is a priority, steps have been taken towards closure of mines and restoring the environment. The question then is when will people be the priority? We have to lobby towards making people the priority in the government agenda.

Dr. Ramnika Gupta

Dr. Ramnika Gupta is an advocate, writer, poet, political activist and a social worker. She has worked extensively on women's issues related to displacement and mining, especially in the coal mining belt of the present state of Jharkhand. She is an accomplished activist fighting for the cause of the indigenous people and striving for their rights- land rights, livelihood rights and preserving their ethnicity and identity. Dr. Ramnika Gupta spoke on the various impacts of mining on people and society, highlighting the socio cultural impacts of mining.

A simple example that she quoted gave a deeper understanding of the extent to which people's life have been affected by mining. In the coal mining areas of Jharkhand- Ramgarh, Hazaribagh, Ranchi, one witnesses men on cycles carrying not less than 2 tonnes of coal, and women carrying coal, waiting for hours, in anticipation of buyers. The coal that they collect is illegal coal and they are forced into this for lack of any other source of employment. Their earnings range from Rs.40-50 a day, a meager sum to make ends meet. To earn this meager livelihood, they are termed as illegal miners. Women in coal mining areas have been reduced to scavengers and illegal self-employed workers in coalmines, for lack of other alternatives. This is the current status of many women in mining areas.

Rehabilitation

Speaking on displacement and rehabilitation she said that the disturbance to the tribals' quiet and simple life starts with the process of land acquisition. The whole process of land acquisition takes them unawares. The Adivasis have always considered that they were the protectors to the land and forests and therefore, worship the same. When they suddenly realise that the land they have been tilling for generations no longer belongs to them, they are ill-equipped to deal with this whole situation, so much so that, they are unable to demand for alternatives or compensation. The Adivasis are unaware of their rights in this whole process of land acquisition. Thus, land acquisition in mining areas takes place without the people being informed or of them realising its implications.

Further, rehabilitating the displaced happens only when people mobilize themselves and demand for their rights. To date the state has not constituted an R&R policy to ensure the rights of the people. Compensation has been given depending on what the communities have demanded and there is no uniformity in compensation provided either by the government or by the private sector. Compensation has never been given voluntarily but followed after constant struggles and lobbying.

Effects of Displacement on Women

Traditionally, Adivasi women are more hardworking compared to the men. Despite this they have no right over the land. The land records have always been in the name of the male members of the family. Thus practically, by every means women have no rights or claims over the land. They are completely uprooted from their economic base and source of livelihood. Forced into such a situation, they do not even have any kind of support or social security. There is no law to safeguard the economic rights of displaced women due to mining. The government seems to be oblivious to this whole situation and no steps are taken to give back their lost economic rights.

Further, as mining offers limited employment, they have no alternatives to livelihood. A few fortunate women seek employment in the mines, in the unorganized sector. In some instances, the situation is so dire, that they have resorted to prostitution for a source of livelihood. The need for a secure source of livelihood is a constant burden suffered by these displaced women.

Socio-Cultural Impacts of Mining

Displacement has several effects on the lives of the tribals, especially on women. It implies loss of land and access to forests; rights to forestland, livelihood opportunities for women, drinking water, etc. Women's main source of livelihood the forest produce- making bidis, various products of leaves, and the entire range of the alternative source of livelihood has been destroyed. Further, the onset of mining has deteriorated the health status of women in the communities.

Mine blasting has deteriorated the quality of water in the mining areas. The entire land has dried up in the mining regions. The deterioration in the quality of water and inaccessibility to water imposes additional burden on women, as traditionally they perform the domestic chores of carrying water to their homes. The ground water level has gone down considerably. Lack of safe drinking water, has given rise to several health problems. The only source of water in many areas is contaminated, which has its impact on women's health. Asthma, TB and other diseases are common complaints of women in these areas.

She quoted a simple example that clearly showed the negative impact of other cultures on the harmony between men and women among the tribal communities. Previously tribal men and women used to dance together, hand in hand. At present, due to other cultural influences the women have become introverts and don't participate in community functions. Their role is being restricted to the home. Non-tribal languages are replacing their rich and pure tribal dialects. The tribal language, like the tribals and their culture, is becoming extinct. This is due to migration of tribals to other areas for livelihood and adopting other cultures and languages. Many tribal communities have become extinct and merged with other religions and cultures. She gave an instance where a committee was constituted by Vidhan Sabha to find out the whereabouts of the Adivasis displaced by the Tata Company. The team was unable to trace the tribe at all, as over time, they had dispersed into the mainstream. The whole exercise of preserving the tribe, after inflicting atrocities on them, is futile.

Conclusion

Overall, the quality of life has deteriorated due to mining and displacement. Displacement has eroded their whole livelihood and people have been transformed from being farmers and agriculturalists to illegal scavengers of mines. The magnitude of the impact of mining is immense if all these aspects are accounted for. There has been a tremendous loss to their culture and lives. Further, the shift to open cast mining has deteriorated the situation further, as it has more drastic impact on the environment and agriculture making the land impossible to till.

The tribals have realized that they have to be united, organize themselves and raise their voices against the injustice meted out to them. Women too are increasingly becoming aware that they have to participate in this struggle. The tribals have to mobilize themselves into becoming strong bargainers with the State or with the private sector. The tribals have to build their capabilities to negotiate for adequate compensation. Mining should commence, only when the affected areas give consent and land for land compensation given. She stressed on the fact that we have to fight towards adoption of this policy of strict rehabilitation of people. Else all kinds of development will take place at the cost of tribals, completely destroying their existence and uprooting them. Further, no policy exists to restore the land and environment back to the tribals after mine closure. Before commencement of any project, the tribals have to bring in restoration of land and environment into the negotiation process. Restoring the land to the tribals is the only way to preserve the tribals and ensure that they do not get dispersed in the scheme of things.

Ms. Durga Jha

Ms. Durga Jha, from Dalit Study Council, Raipur, Chattisgarh gave a brief presentation on the tribal culture and how it is deteriorating due to influences from other cultures, industries and especially the mining industry.

Ms. Durga highlighted the various ways in which the companies exploit the tribals without being accountable to the local communities or to the workers. The mining companies do not employ labour from the near by villages, but employ migrant labour, especially from Bihar. Employing migrant labour has several advantages. For one, they do not take holidays as their hometown is away. This safeguards the productivity of the company. But the main reason is that in the event of mine accidents they simply remove the worker's name from the company registers. The mineworker's death goes unaccounted for, their families are not informed and their names. Their families live under the belief that their son/ brother / husband are still working in the mines. As the migrant labourer does not have anybody in the nearby villages, there is no one to realize his absence or raise voices about his death. This clearly shows that companies can go to any extent to exploit labour as they do not value human life.

Further, employing migrant labour has several other repercussions on the tribal society. The migrant labour seeks the tribal women to satisfy their sexual needs. The rate of illegitimate children and concubines are on the rise in these areas. Typically, the non-tribals lure the tribal women, acquire ownership of tribal land in the process, and after a couple of years get their non-tribal wives and settle down in tribal areas. This leaves the tribal women with no choice or means of survival, either on land or through labour. They ultimately seek survival in prostitution. This is the status of tribal women in Chattisgarh.

Ms. Durga Jha then proceeded to present her paper on tribal culture and the impacts of mining on women.

Tribal Culture

The Adivasis have a rich culture and system of community living. For e.g. in any crisis the whole villages assemble and attempt to solve individual problems collectively, sharing expenses and labour whenever necessary. This kind of harmony and oneness is non-existent in the urban communities. The main reason for women enjoying this status in society is due to their role in the economy and livelihood, both on land and forests.

Cultural Impacts due to Mining

- Women are the worst affected due to mining as it appropriates their land and hence livelihood. Some of the areas where women are most seriously affected relate to displacement, water and air pollution, loss of forest land, social insecurity and inequality in work.
- Mining activities have destroyed the cultural heritage and harmony among the tribals. The tribals are losing their identity due to contact with the non-tribal mine workers. For e.g the dowry system, till date absent among the tribals has been introduced into their system. Negative patriarchal dominance has entered the society.
- Women are forced to work in mining areas and exploited in many ways and the problem of unwed mothers, illegitimate children are on the rise.
- Drug abuse and liquor has spread widely in their areas and women are also getting addicted to the same. Wife battering has become quite common among the tribals
- The values that the tribals cherished and learnt from, nature has disappeared. The association between women and nature has been adversely affected.
- The Adivasi livelihood and economic philosophy has become meaningless and commercialization has set in.
- Earlier women had a right to property and land. With the onset of mining they have lost this right due to influences from the outside world and they are forced to work in the mines.

Conclusion

Mining and land acquisition has increased since the time the new state of Chattisgarh was constituted. Development seemed synonymous with the coming up of industrial plants all over the state and hence displacement. Chattisgarh represents a vast diversity in culture and heritage. But now, the tribal areas in Chattisgarh are undergoing immense cultural, social and political changes as also changes in the livelihood patterns. There seems to be unrest among the tribals towards this whole approach to development.

To conclude she added that media plays an important role in bringing out issues to the forefront. The press has to highlight all these issues and create consciousness and awareness in society. The media has to take the responsibility of bringing out the true picture in front of the people and not come under any pressure from the politicians or the system. This seminar should address these issues and come up with an agenda to take this forward.

Ms. Indu Netam

Ms. Indu Netam belongs to Maraktola village, Khankher Jilla, Chattisgarh. An Adivasi herself, she has been working for several years with the Adivasis affected due to mining. She is also member of the Co-operative society Adivasi Khanij Utkhannan Shramik Samiti. The co-operative society has been in operation for the past 10 years and fighting for obtaining a mining lease. They have also recently formed a new organization Adivasi Sanstha Manch. Further, she is also actively involved in mobilizing the tribals, addressing social issues, exploitation, and injustices meted out to the Adivasis.

Ms. Indu Netam emphasized the association of the tribals with their land. Land is an integral part of the Adivasis life. An Adivasi woman's life is very closely knit to her land, which generates her livelihood and also gives her a status in society. This whole sense of belongingness, to their land is lost when the land is taken away from them. The state has never made any attempt to understand this aspect of the tribals.

The government and private companies lure the Adivasis into believing that mining will bring about development and improvement in the quality of their lives. But the ground reality is something quite different. What has happened in the process is that the tribals have lost their land, culture, heritage, and livelihood and not got back anything in return. The government has taken away their land for "public purpose" without providing adequate compensation. There are instances where the same people have been displaced several times without being paid any compensation or rehabilitation.

Socio Cultural Impacts of Mining

Mining has eroded the family system and harmony among the tribals. During rehabilitation, the jobs given are inadequate to sustain the whole family. Any kind of rehabilitation is insufficient for the whole family. Typically, compensation is given to only one male member of the family, and no options exist to the others. This results in families getting disintegrated and erosion of the whole family system. Mining activities have given rise to a hoard of social issues, previously unknown to them. Ultimately what happens, apart from their alienation from land and livelihood is complete destruction of Adivasi life. As mining generally occurs in Adivasi areas, there is a persistent sense of insecurity as to where there is going to be mining next and who is going to get displaced. This constant threat, insecurity has become a part of their lives. The insecurity associated with land is tremendous. As people are not informed about the commencement of mining, they are unprepared and are under a grip of fear as to when they will be victimized by the companies.

She then pointed out that the outsiders have prejudices against Adivasis as being uncivilized and they advocate development in the form of mining. She very strongly said that the State's authority to decide on behalf of the people on what is good for them has to be questioned. The State is indifferent to the Adivasis and has made feeble attempts at restoring their livelihoods or in preserving their cultures. The tribals have never exhibited greed, nor exploited the natural resources or forests or minerals. They are content with their land and livelihood. Vices such as shrewdness, cheating and corruption are unknown to them. The whole community is built upon trust and harmony. This whole system is being eroded due to displacement, influences by the non-tribals and other cultures.

Alternatives to Displacement

An interesting issue raised by Ms. Indu Netam is that Adivasis and their initiatives to form mining co-operative and to operate mines on their own. The single major issue in mining is loss of land and displacement, which in turn gives rise to a whole range of social, economic, political and cultural issues. Forming mining cooperatives is a simple solution to this whole problem, wherein Adivasis would become collective owners of the mines. The very fact that the State is making no attempts to involve the Adivasis or enable them to participate in this process is of serious concern. This indicates that the State is not interested in the welfare of the people and their plight after displacement, but its interests lie in promoting the mining companies and its ability to generate revenue through and for them.

The government can give assistance in developing and ensuring sustainable functioning of people's mining co-operatives. Adivasis can be trained to be employed or to become owners of mines. No attempt is made by the state to encourage people's co-operatives where the communities can decide where mining should be done, what compensation to be paid, etc.

To conclude, she quoted examples of atrocities and harassment by the government officials, when their cooperative has demanded for leases. She narrated a recent example of the tribals in Nagarnar (Chhattisgarh) where the Gram Sabha did not give approval for the commencement of the Steel Plant sanctioned to National Mineral Development Corporation. The officials forged signatures and a NOC was fraudulently obtained. The Gram Sabha registers were forged, and officials right from the District Collector were involved in the fraudulence. This example shows the corrupt system one is fighting against and the plight of the Adivasis leaving no room for the peoples' voices to be heard. When people campaigned against the state and its machinery, the police went on a rampage destroying their homes. People were homeless for almost three months. The media and the outside world gave no coverage to this event, and the lives lost are today, closed in the books of history.

To conclude, she said that it is the Adivasi who gets displaced, and women are more affected due to displacement. Though most of the issues in mining are related to women, they are not addressed separately nor dealt with in depth.

There has to be a platform where issues related to women can be addressed. There are obstacles at every stage of the struggle. It is only the solidarity and unity among the struggle groups that will keep this struggle alive. If the nation cannot do away with mining, some alternatives can be developed looking into where mining occurs for the benefit of the people and protects the environment. The struggle groups have to strive towards bringing out the following into the priority list and agenda of the State :

- Adequate compensation and rehabilitation.
- Employment opportunities in the mines - skilled training to work in the mines.
- Initiate mine Co-operatives among the Adivasis.
- Constitute laws to protect and safeguard the interests of the Adivasis.

Ms. Bina Stanis

Ms. Bina Stanis represented the Chhotanagpur Adivasi Sewa Samiti, East Parej, Hazaribagh. CASS has been working for many years on displacement and other issues of the Adivasis affected by coal mining and particularly under the Coal India Ltd. She presented their experience of fighting with the World Bank subsequent to the Inspection Panel's investigation report on the Coal Sector Environmental and Social Mitigation Project.

Background

The Coal Sector Environmental and Social Mitigation Project (CSESMP) of the World Bank was designed to assist Coal India Ltd.'s efforts to mitigate the environmental and social impacts of mining expansion to be undertaken in 25 mines under the Coal Sector Rehabilitation Project (CSRP). The International Development Association granted a Credit of US\$ 63 million to finance the CSESMP in May 1996.

The objectives of CSESMP was to :

- Enhance CIL's institutional capacity to deal more effectively with environmental and social issues.
- Implement policies for environmental and R&R mitigation of affected people.
- Help CIL develop its policies for R&R, Community Development, Environmental Management.

By means of -

- Rehabilitation Action Plans (RAPs) for 14 mines where people were to be resettled.
- Indigenous Peoples' Development Programmes (IPDP) in 25 mines for villages within 1 km radius of the mines.
- Capacity building and institutional changes in CIL (appointment and training of R&R officers, Public Information Centres)
- Appointing NGOs to facilitate the RAPs and IPDP's Formation of Village Working Groups.
- "Self-employment" as the main strategy for economic rehabilitation,

The situation is quite contrary in the Parej East mines, owned and operated by Central Coal India Ltd (CCL), a subsidiary of Coal India Ltd (CIL) where mine expansion operations affect 2 villages -Parej and Durukasmar. Despite pressure from international NGOs not to approve the loan before undertaking a thorough study of the affected people, the Bank has approved the loan in 1995.

Local residents of East Parej, through the NGO, CASS submitted a request for inspection on June 21, 2001 to the Inspection Panel. The Inspection Panel, an independent body of the World Bank with powers to conduct investigations that reports directly to the Bank's Board, concluded that World Bank staff violated the Bank's own policies on resettlement, indigenous peoples' environmental assessment and project supervision. The report vindicated the allegations made by local NGOs and the exploitation meted out to the project affected people.

After presenting this brief background of the CSESMP and how it has violated all the clauses and policies laid out in the project itself, Ms. Bina proceeded to give an account of the actual situation and cases of the project affected people.

The original inhabitants of the hamlets, the Turis were traditional basket makers. Basket making was their main source of livelihood supplemented by forest produce and other related activities. The Turis were the first to get displaced in 1998. The company resorted to various methods to scare and evict the people. They got the excise officials to impose heavy taxes on their production of country liquor, and register false criminal cases against them. They performed heavy blasting and when the people retaliated, arrested them on false cases. There have been several unaccounted prison deaths. The nexus between the company and the state functionaries is too strong for these people to obtain justice. The state, instead of protecting the welfare of the tribals, inflicts further injustice on them. In some cases they have even resorted to threatening people in the event of resistance.

In 1999, Borwa Tola was the second hamlet that was displaced. The villagers refused to shift unless their livelihood was restored. Meanwhile, huge machines bulldozed mud houses, as the helpless villagers watched and hurriedly scrambled to collect their meager belongings. It was a war like situation, with the Magistrate, the Police and the CCL officials threatening the people over wireless sets. People were dumped in petty shops and warehouses that had no ventilation or windows. In one year alone, of the 12 families that were forcibly evicted, there were several deaths. Families were destroyed in the process due to lack of any kind of support. Five women who were part of the first self help group started in this area, in Agria Tola have died in this process. This was mainly due to lack of access to livelihood, food, wages, drinking water, proper housing and the resultant ill-health.

Thousands of Mahua trees, which were used for making liquor and hence provide livelihood to the tribals, were bulldozed. The baseline survey has made a ridiculous statement that no tribals in these areas are dependant on forest produce for subsistence or for livelihood. The small streams flowing nearby are completely covered with overburden and there is nothing remaining of these streams. The topsoil has been completely eroded and no attempt made to preserve it. Lamé excuses such as lack of space to dump the topsoil due to unwillingness of the people to get displaced, were given. Further, there is vast discrimination in the rehabilitation houses provided to the displaced people and the CCL quarters built by the company for its management staff. CIL quarters are equipped with water, electricity, and other physical amenities whereas the rehabilitation houses are pathetic and inhabitable.

Conclusion

The CSESMP is supposed to mitigate the environment and social losses to the people. East Parej is full of stories of false promises, of jobs, education, and employment to local people and also to women. The head of the first family to get displaced, a 32 year old Turi, has been reduced to a state of physical handicap, walking with the help of a stick. This is the situation of people who have sacrificed their cultural rights, social rights and economic rights for the nation. These losses never get computed in the project. The World Bank does not take responsibility of this situation by arguing that they have not acquired the land, and the damage done to the surrounding areas and environment gets never accounted for.

As of now, 87,000 people have been retrenched in the 24 mines that the World Bank has funded. It is ironical that on one hand the mines has retrenched the workers, and on the other, it claims to increase livelihood opportunities. This is a clear dual role played by the Bank.

Seven years after the project came into existence, the Inspection Panel has concluded that the project has not kept up the commitments laid out. If this is the destruction within 7 years of its existence, one wonders what will be the situation, 20 years down the line, at the end of the project life. Lobby and pressure from International NGO's and local groups on the World Bank against sanctioning

the loan to CIL, is the need of the hour. This is of great concern else there will be tremendous loss to this faceless mass of unemployed people.

Ms. Mukta Jhodia

An Adivasi from Kasipur, Raigada district of Orissa where she has been fighting along with all the other tribals under the banner of Maa Mati Surakshya Parishad (PSSP), against the joint venture Alumina Plant, Utkal Alumina Ltd (UAIL).

The following was narrated by Mukta in Adivasi Odiya, the local language of the tribals

I am coming from a place where we are fighting a corporate giant for the last eight years. They never told us that they would initiate industrial operations in our area. They began to install rigs and when we questioned them they said that they are not accountable to us. They said that the government has sent them to do this work, which is merely to survey our lands. We women are fighting this battle under the banner of Maa Mati Sangharsh Samiti (there are also other organizations which are working in a big way...Prakrutiko Sampadana Suraksha Parishad).

Whenever we questioned the administration or the related company officials about what is going to become of us or what they are doing, we have always received only police brutality. They, the corporate goons as well as the policemen, have come to our villages to terrorise us. I beat up a policeman with my slippers. They have even killed our brothers in 2001 in Maikanch in an unprovoked firing. The policemen descended on our village one day and began to talk to us women in a very indecent and aggressive manner upon which we created an uproar. Why not? Our brothers came running to save us. The police opened fire and killed three of our men. They do not consider us as humans.

We cannot but fight to rescue our lands from being snatched away from us. This land feeds us. We depend on this land to earn our livelihood, we are like monkeys in a jungle. We need the forest and our Gods to live. We have our own streams. This land is our Mother. We are not educated or know nothing else other than to slog in the lap of our Mother Earth. We (Adivasis) have been created by God to protect the land and the forests. Once the company comes we do not know what is going to happen to us. We will be nowhere. We will fight till finish as we have no other means of subsistence and we have to save our lands.



Women displaced due to Mining - Kasipur, Orissa.

Session - II

Women in Mining Struggles

Background Paper

The Invisibility of Gender Concerns in Mining Struggles

The brutal transformation of life in all dimensions social, cultural, economic, political and physical - as a result of a mining activity, is felt most agonizingly by the women in the affected communities. Women instinctively, understand deep within themselves, the tragic consequences of losing their spaces and resources. Often they are forced to shift to new economies and it has never occurred to humanity, in the past, that they are a community to consult with and to weigh development from a gender perspective. In brief, they have always been taken for granted when they are displaced, when their bodies are abused, even when they have not experienced any perceptible gains from what mankind has defined as development.

This perspective has so deeply entrenched into the mindset of society that what has happened to the women in the mining regions is completely ignored either by the policy makers or law enforcers or by the consumers while the industry prefers to down-play the consequences. Even for the women, it has never occurred to them that their unexpressed fears, their nauseating experiences, their unquestioned submissions to the might of the mining industry has a deeper injustice and discrimination based on gender. Women have so unconsciously accepted this discrimination that when they are part of a struggle in a mining context, their demands and protests are merely to ensure rights and better opportunities for the men in the communities and rarely anything directly for themselves.

This has been the history of mining struggles everywhere in the world. When the men are laid off, the women take part in large numbers to stop retrenchment of men. When fighting for wages and working conditions, it is for that of the men. When the companies are at their door-steps, they defiantly face the bull dozers to fight for their lands and for the men in the communities to get the jobs, or lands or compensation from the mining companies and from governments. Right from land alienation, displacement, prospecting and extraction of minerals to mine closure women experience a wide range of problems which are gender specific within the larger impacts of mining on the communities as a whole. These problems have to be recognized and addressed by the state, the mining industries and by the civil society and mining struggles themselves.

Women in the Existing and Abandoned Mines

Lessons for the Women in the Greenfields

For the women living in the mining regions for years, life is a struggle for existence and for dignity of life. When the mines come, they bring with them all the social evils of external societies which may not have been present prior to mining. The socio-cultural disturbances which create situations of conflict and suffering on a daily basis for the women, seriously affect their physical and mental well-being. From a situation where women were pre-occupied with issues related to improved livelihoods and incomes, simple health and infrastructure needs, primary education, etc. in pre-mining

conditions, the focus of problems shift to protecting their existing livelihoods and resources, fighting against new forms of diseases and illnesses, coping up with new forms of atrocities and human rights violations and participating in struggles for basic rights. While for the men, the mining companies and governments become their enemies, for the women they have to first cope up with the exploitation of the men from within their communities and households as a result of external influences and changes in social values and cohesion. For instance, in a workshop organised with adivasi women from mining and non-mining communities, the problems expressed by women in the latter areas related to drinking water, roads, housing, agriculture development, etc (which are common issues of the community as a whole) while those from the former areas identified wife-battering, alcoholism, desertion, unemployment, starvation, gambling, infidelity, AIDS and other such issues as their most critical problems. Hence the struggles of women have taken new forms and dimensions making them defenseless against the onslaught of mining induced exploitation.

When companies close down or abandon the mines, they leave with little respect for cleaning up the land and environment or for any accountability towards its workers and local communities. Here the struggles of women from the mining communities shift to finding new ways of survival for their families as the men are retrenched and do not bring home any income. Here their struggle is for a new life which is alien and uncertain and which forces them out of their homes and to cope up with the prolonged tensions and conflicts between workers and management over closure issues.

Equipped with the exposure and information regarding the above situations, facilitated by voluntary organisations and community struggle groups as much as understanding their own symbiosis with land and forests, many local people's movements are emerging in forest regions where people are threatened by proposed mining projects. The mining industry is hunting for virgin areas for exploitation of mineral resources and given the proposals of private and transnational companies and approvals by central and state governments, the trend is towards opening up new areas (green fields) thickly forested and having vast populations of adivasi communities for large scale mining projects.

Women are increasingly participating in grass-roots movements in opposing the entry of new mining until responsibilities to communities in earlier projects are fulfilled. They are either saying no to mining completely or demanding for proper rehabilitation and compensation before starting the mining projects. It is in this crucial situation of people's movements in mining that both local struggles and organisations supporting struggles have to get sensitized to issues of gender. The problems of women in mining vary between different stages of mining and from different types of mining. Each of these areas has to be studied in greater depth.

There is an urgent need to identify mining issues which concern women, build up the strength and capacities of women in identifying these areas and taking the leadership in mining struggles for focusing on these issues, provide information and enable women to take decisions independently on the nature of development, livelihood, rehabilitation and gender justice they desire, within or without mining. Organisations and civil society also have to get sensitive and lobby for policies which specifically focus on women in mining and women proposed to be affected by mining as this is a sector which has given least priority to women's rights and dignities.

There is a new arena in mining which is fast emerging and will be a crucial area of focus for India in the future, given the aggressive campaigns for propagating this venture by the mining industries. This is called corporate engagement and corporate social responsibility.

Corporate Social Responsibility - Engagement with Women

The mining corporates including the World Business Council for Sustainable Development are today making hasty attempts at projecting a human face to their corporate misdeeds under the euphemism 'corporate social responsibility'. By this the industry implies self regulated codes of conduct and adoption of corporate best practices to reform themselves and mitigate the negative impacts of mining on people and the environment in the future. They have admitted in their project on Mining, Minerals and Sustainable Development (MMSD) report that most often local communities gain the least from mining projects and stand to lose their lands, resources and livelihoods apart from facing the risk of mine hazards and pollution even years after the mines are closed.

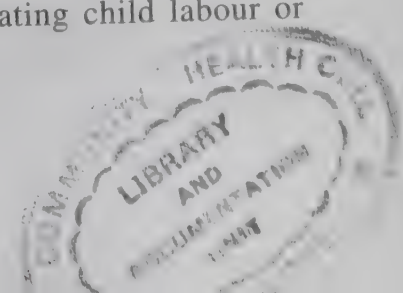
Therefore, they propose to engage with the local communities to negotiate on issues mainly of rehabilitation and compensation. They are coming forward with development programmes and incentives in lieu of the lands and displacement that would or have resulted from their projects. Governments have shown great interest in this approach of engagement as a means of reducing people's conflicts in mining affected regions.

Today there is an increasing pressure on communities and NGO's (as arbitrators/mediators) to enter into a dialogue and negotiation with the mining industries. Especially where NGO's are concerned the conflict over engagement ranges from positions of co-option, earnest attempts at getting the best for the communities they work with, a soft option in contrast to supporting a direct people's movement, or simply a means of survival and livelihood for the NGO's themselves (which includes international and bilateral financial institutions, donor/funding agencies, universities, academic and research institutions, consulting firms, intermediary organisations, advocacy groups, community based development organisations, trade unions and the like).

Where NGO's are not forthcoming to join this process, a popular mechanism being adopted by the industry is to themselves create NGO's and community development organisations which perform the tasks of consulting the communities and implementing their programmes. A very recent example is the Utkal Rural Development Society (URDS) of Utkal Alumina Project in Kasipur, Orissa.

Given this context of engagement what are the implications when communities are drawn into this process and particularly what is the nature and impact on the women in the communities when negotiating either with governments or with mining companies. First we have to understand the grass-roots situation in a country like India. Most mining projects are largescale occupying vast areas of forest and people's lands in rural and tribal regions of the country. These are areas where women are largely illiterate with literacy levels ranging from anywhere between 2% and 17%.

Women in the mainstream Indian society are vulnerable to social, cultural and economic discriminations and deprivations even in the traditional form of economy. They have no access to information, resources or to decision making either in the political or economic arenas. The country is still battling with age old gender based exploitation and has not achieved remarkable results in ensuring either education, health, basic amenities or to issues of equality or of safeguarding their rights and lives. It has not yet ensured consensus on pressing subjects like reservations for women, their participation in panchayats and other democratic processes, their right to equal education and employment opportunities, equal pay and wages or in eradicating child labour or female infanticide.



In a situation of mining where all these social evils and discriminations are aggravated, what is the basis on which companies and governments assure that communities and women will be consulted and that a level playing ground could be created for women to participate fearlessly, intelligently and equally to make decisions whether to accept or veto any projects and that their decisions would be respected in actions by the governments and companies? For this to be ensured objectively, women in the communities have to be given project related information to make the right choices. Who would ensure that the right information is given to women governments, NGO's or companies themselves?

The history of people's struggles in India, whether with mining or with dams or with any other 'development' projects, does not provide an authentic reputation from either governments or companies while disclosing information to people. In a country where NGO's are equally in the lurch about project information and face repression for assisting people's demands for information, that women in the communities in future can live in confidence of obtaining information, is a matter of ridicule. Kasipur, Nagarnar, Borra, Hazaribagh there are too many live examples where women have demanded for information and have faced the consequences from the state and the mining lobbies.

Even when independent fact finding committees have visited disturbed mining areas, there have been brutal attacks and smothering of information through threats and assaults. Such instances were reported in the case of Nagarnar when a team visited the people who were protesting against the NMDC's proposed Steel Plant in Chattisgarh. Especially in mining projects where there is a strong presence of the mafia, extremists and political nexus, as in the coal mines of Jharkhand or the iron-ore mines of Orissa, or in the Singareni Collieries of A.P, the situation is too intimidating for women to participate in public meetings with the government or companies to articulate their problems and demand for redressal. Hence, most often, public hearings, consultation meetings, etc are a mere mandatory procedure rather than a proper consultation with the women or with the communities. The question here is, are our governments in a position to provide a free and fair atmosphere for women to participate without fear.

Along with illiteracy is the lack of skills to participate in mining. Neither mining companies nor governments have worked towards building the capacities and skills of women to take part in mining operations. Hence negotiations primarily relate to women's demands for employment for the men in the communities, which have no direct benefits to their own livelihoods. The trends in large scale mining projects under our new mineral policy are shifting from public sector projects to divestment and joint ventures. The transnational companies enter after the governments have acquired the lands. Complaints by communities that they have not been properly rehabilitated or compensated are not addressed by the companies on the pretext that the governments were responsible for this, as per the laws of the country.

India does not have a Relief and Rehabilitation policy, leave alone a gender based one. On what legal mechanisms do women in the affected communities anchor themselves with when mining industries report that they have consulted the women in the communities and that they have followed all rules and regulations with regard to community participation. Our Land Acquisition Act does not provide for women's rights to rehabilitation or compensation to their loss over the lands, livelihoods or other resources. The women's struggles either while fighting mining projects with the state (as in Nagarnar) or with the multinationals (as in Kasipur) or with Indian mining giants (as with the Jindals in Chattisgarh and Goa) or with small local mining companies (as in Rajasthan and in thousands of other places in the country) the experience has been far from a fruitful and a "win-win situation" for the women affected.

Where women are suffering mining related hazards, pollution, waste disposal, denial of access to natural resources, incomplete rehabilitation or housing facilities, mine disasters, etc they have not had any

access to a dialogue or redressal of their grievances by the industry or if they did, the entire exercise is lengthy, tiresome and aimed at disenchanting the struggle group so much so that people's movements are too fatigued to show interest in further dialogue. This has been the reality whether with private mining industries or with international financial institutions funding mining projects like the World Bank, a good example of which is the East Parej experience in Hazaribagh which is battling with the Bank even after the Inspection Panel's Report. One of the important demands and recommendations of the local group that the women's rights to entitlement over lands and rights of access to forest resources, is still pending with the Bank and the management.

The entire mining cycle throws up a series of problems for the communities. There are no concerns shown towards women's health and livelihood after mine disasters, accidents, spillage, closure. Most often companies declare themselves bankrupt and refuse to clean up. Also, most often there is no closure plan and if there is one, it is not properly implemented. Kolar Gold Fields is a stark example of this. When communities and women have very little bargaining capacity with public sector companies, their vulnerability is much more severe when they have to negotiate with the private sector which has no formal social responsibility.

In the past, people's struggles in India, had not experienced abuse of women participating in movements to the extent that it is happening today. Women have always been in the forefront of movements facing the police, the government or the landlords. Today there is a visible increase in state and corporate aggression towards women also. Women protesting or demanding for their rights and for their lands are being brutally beaten up, taken into illegal custody, physically and sexually abused and constantly harassed to force them to give up their struggles. Such abuse against women is taking serious turns with the growing criminalisation of politico-corporate powers and the involvement of multiple 'stake-holders' up to global levels in a sector like mining.

A good example of this situation had become evident in the attempts at suppressing the Kasipur struggle in Orissa where multiple players were involved the two transnational companies (Alcan and Norsk Hydro) along with Indal, the World Bank with its Business Partners for Development (BPD) and CARE International. The BPD has allegedly been involved in calling NGO's and the people for talks on "Building a Tribal Vision For Development". A workshop to 'engage the local community' was organized and co-sponsored by CARE India to intervene, clearly, on behalf of the company. In reality, the BPD engagement was with the non tribals from the surrounding villages who were not affected by the project and this heightened communal tensions in the area. It became unsafe for women to go the village markets and finally led to a police firing in Maikanch village where three people were killed and many women and children were injured. Many false cases were filed against the tribal women opposing the project.

Corporate solutions to women's grievances have been to offer welfare schemes and incentives like community health counseling, micro credit and income generating programmes, hosting of cultural events, vocational training, primary education and the like without addressing the fundamental issues of land rights, loss of livelihoods, pollution induced health hazards or abuses and atrocities.

The Ideal Vs the Real

While it is true that companies do project well intentioned and sensitive policies (increasingly today) with regard to project affected communities, while it is also true that financial institutions, academic, research institutions and technical experts appointed/hired by the projects for review and rehabilitation do recommend just and fair measures to be adopted for ensuring people's rights and best practices in mining,

the actual issue is reality. In a situation of intrusion by larger and more powerful players like mining industries and the state, it is the people who are left to defend, to prove, to protest, to demand and to continue to suffer while it takes years of media, civil society and vigilant and assertive communities to make governments and industries comply to communities' rights and environmental concerns. Most often, women are intimidated and humiliated when their allegations of suffering ill-health, pollution, etc due to irresponsible management, are over ridden by companies' display of technology and usage of terminology which is beyond the comprehension of illiterate rural and tribal women.

One Pound of Flesh

Hence, corporate social responsibility, best practices, benchmarks and community engagement can have meaningful results to women affected or proposed to be affected by mining when:

- Accurate and timely information is given
- Women's participation in decision-making is taken seriously
- Women's education and occupational skills are significantly enhanced
- Women are provided legal and real rights over natural resources
- Women have the right to oppose
- Companies first take responsibility for the physical, emotional and sexual atrocities on women committed in past and existing projects
- Companies clean up projects existing and abandoned before entering into a dialogue with women in the green field areas
- Companies and governments make an earnest gender audit of existing and abandoned projects
- Companies achieve responsible behaviour from their male employees to stop abuses and atrocities on women
- Stop colluding with mafia, political and other stake-holders in suppressing women's struggles in mining
- Companies ensure livelihood and economic enhancement for women in the regions not just through model income generating schemes but in a more universal manner like in their traditional economies
- Extract minerals in a manner which does not destroy the other natural resources which exist in the same regions so that women's livelihoods, security and ecological resources are sustained
- When governments respect women's decision to choose their livelihoods mining or traditional land based systems and have the capacity to resist industrial lobbying
- Our governments provide a sensitive gender policy on mining and ensure proper implementation of laws and policies related to women's rights and livelihoods
- Our governments can provide a situation of enhanced economic and social status for the women where mining can be proved to be a more desirable and viable option for them than any other form of existing or probable economic activities with the natural resources available.

The important question is are our governments and the mining industries prepared to confront and ensure these 'benchmarks' of social responsibility and gender justice?

Presentations

This session focused on identifying areas of invisibility of gender issues and women's participation in mining struggles, analyzing women's struggle needs in different mine cycles and examining the present situation of women's resistance to mining, women and corporate engagement, women fighting for rights in existing mines, women's struggles after mine closure and need for sensitization of communities, struggle groups, advocacy groups, trade unions, legislative and judicial bodies.

Mr. Ashim Roy

Mr. Ashim Roy, a trade union activist from the New Trade Union Initiative in Gujarat, looked at mining issue from three different levels. In the first level the land is acquired for mining also called the land acquisition process. The second level is basically a transition phase or the phase between land acquisition and mining operations. The third phase is the phase in which the mining operations starts. He discussed the labour process and the issues that have to be addressed in these three levels.

Talking about the first phase he said that the labour process should be seen in the light of transition from right to livelihood to right to work. When the mining comes, it destroys the other sources of livelihood also but this kind of loss is never taken into consideration in the larger framework of profit and loss. This issue should be addressed seriously.

He also added that we should not only ask for right to work in the mines, but we should also be partners in the resulting developmental activities that can provide work to the labourers apart from the mines. He strongly felt that the displaced should not be guaranteed to work in the mines only, but they should also be given employment in other areas too. Talking further about the first phase he added that all the disputes should be dealt in the first phase itself rather than waiting for the results in the next phase.

Coming to the next phase, i.e. the transition phase, he emphasized on the “cooperative development” and urged all the concerned to push this agenda forward as there are only few who are doing so. Even the financial institutions, or for that matter any other concerned organizations can push the agenda for the benefit of the different stakeholders. Cooperative mining will also ensure the participation of women in a big way. Then there is a need to bring women into unions so that women's issues can be handled effectively and also fight discrimination due to gender insensitivity.

In the end he mentioned that the last 10 years has adopted a campaign approach, but now it has been rectified, rather it has gone through a transition and has named it as basic labour rights approach. But discrimination has not been included in this approach. So there is a need to include this also to make it more credible.

Br. Philip Neri

Br. Philip Neri presented a general overview of the mining scenario in Goa. He said that Goa comes across as a tourist spot, a city of fun and frolic, but there is also a dark side to Goa. Mining industry is slowly destroying the beauty of the state. It controls Goa's economy. The northern district of Goa is fully captured by mining companies and gradually South Goa too is getting mined. People have just started awakening to the devastation done by mining companies and raising voices against them.

Mr. Philip's brief introduction was followed by women's voices from Goa.

I am Sunita Faterpekar, a resident of Dandorem, Rivona, Sanguem, Goa.

I belong to the Gauda tribe. I have come here to explain about the problem of water. The problem is due to Timblo Pvt. Ltd a mining company. This mine has gone so much inside that it has affected our water table. This is the reason why our coconut trees and Beetlenut plantations have been destroyed. This is not the only loss we face. The mine operator pumps the mud slurry from the pit into the river Kushawati. The women of the village got together and met the manager and asked him to stop the pumping as it has affected our coconut and beetlenut plantations. He in reply asked us to give him our land or else he offered to pay Rs.2000/- each year for the loss incurred due to crop failure. The water problem prevents us from cultivating sugarcane.

I belong to a joint family of 22 members. My mother had to mortgage her gold to buy the land. What will we be able to do with Rs. 2000/-? We used to produce around 70 tonnes of sugarcane per year. Besides that my father had planted coconut saplings and started a small dairy farm. With the income from this small piece of land and the dairy farm my father had managed to maintain our family. Today we are shattered, all due to the selfishness and greed of the mine operator, who also happens to be a woman like myself.

Since the last three years our family had to stop cultivating sugarcane, due to the depletion of water levels, almost all the coconut saplings that were planted by my father, are withering away, we don't even have enough water to feed our cows. The same is the story of other farmers from my village and the neighboring village.

As a group we submitted our petitions to all concerned authorities, the members of the Panchayat of Rivona, Mamlatdar, Collector, Chief Secretary, Irrigation Department, Director of Agriculture, Minister of Agriculture, Deputy Conservator of Forests, Block Development Officer, Deputy Collector and canal officer. None of these authorities had the courtesy to respond to our petition. On the other hand some of them have been trying to discourage us, to the extent of even abusing us.

When we personally met the village Sarpanch who also happens to be the panch member elected from our ward, he too turned us away, saying that he could not do anything in the matter and that we should fend for ourselves! If this is the situation why do we require Sarpanch and Authorities?

When the Deputy Collector came, he went directly to the mines. It seems that he had informed the mine operators about his visit well in advance, while we were kept in the dark. As news filtered about his visit, we went to the mining site to meet him. When he enquired about our demands, we insisted that nobody had a right to touch our water, and that the mine operator would not be allowed to restart the four pumps, to draw out the water from the pit.

We told him to stop the four pumps that pump water day and night. In reply, Deputy Collector told us to stop the mines! Deputy Collector was trying to put us into trouble. We feel he is the Agent of this mining company, as he was speaking in favor of mine operators. When we asked him for the report of his visit, he did not give us. The mine operators offer alcohol, money, promise jobs, trucks to our men, and thus discourage them from join our struggle. They also put wrong ideas in their minds. Hence our movement suffers. I thank you all for giving an ear to our problems.

I am Gokul Gaonkar, a 50-year-old resident of Muscaurem, Sanguem, Goa a former panchayat member. I belong to the Gauda tribe.

I have a field in Dandorem of which I used to collect 16 bags of paddy. This year (March 2003) the same field yielded just 2 bags. I have another in Muscaurem, which used to produce 50 bags. This year I got only 5 bags. In the same village I have a Cashew plantation. In the past I used to get more than 10 bags of cashew seed. This year the season is almost over and I have not yet been able to collect even one bag. I have also a coconut plantation, which is dying due to lack of water. I asked the manager to come and see the pathetic condition. He did not come. Later I made an application to him, inviting him to come and assess the loss incurred by me. This time also he did not come. Later along with other women, I went and stopped the water pumps. Now the quantity of water in our wells and springs has increased a little.

When I was a member of the panchayat, the former sarpanch along with other educated panch members, after telling me that they have demanded that all youth from my ward were to be given jobs on the mine, made me put my thumb impression on a resolution of the panchayat. It was only later that I came to know that I had been tricked, and that the panchayat had illegally given the NOC to the company to set up a washing plant.

I am Lata Gaonkar, from Muscaurem, Sanguem Taluka, Goa. I belong to the Gauda tribe

In my village, Radha Timblo is operating the mine less than 200 meters from the banks of the Kushawati river, the mining has gone below the level of the river. On this she uses 4 huge pumps with 15 inches delivery pipes. The water from the mining pit along with the slurry from the washing plant is pumped into the nalla, which later gets into the Kushawati River. The water is being pumped out due to the presence of ore below the fresh water.

Though they use lime as a settling agent in the water, the pressure with which this water flows, does not allow the settling of the slurry. Hence the mud goes into the River that leads to siltation of the river. The people of Muscaurem also face the health problems like Tuberculosis, Skin problems and other intestinal problems. Those working on the manganese mine, experience tiredness, and bruises on hands and feet.

I am Shoban Gaonkar, from Muscaurem, Sanguem Taluka Goa. I too belong to the Gauda tribe

In my village Radha Timblo is operating a mine that has caused lot of losses in the villages. The traditional occupation of this village is cultivation of paddy, cashew, betalnut and coconut. This year, the cashew crop has failed. So also the coconut trees did not produce much. Now people have to look out for odd jobs outside for their day-to-day living.

When we approached the agents of Timblo (the mines manager) with our grievances he said to us that he would pay the loss we have incurred. He has been saying this for the last 2 years without any implementation. He has also been pressuring us to sell our land to the company. What are we to do if we sell the only land we possess? Come and stay on the pavements of your big cities?

I am Deepa Gaonkar, from Cazur, Quepem Taluka Goa. I too belong to the Gauda tribe. I stand here before you to speak on behalf of people of Mangal in Quepem Taluka of Goa

This village had a community land. Chowgules- the mining company wanted the land. One Dattaram Gad Desai was the mediator between the Village people and the Chowgule mining Company. Dattaram, under the pretext of helping the people approached the illiterate villagers. He volunteered to make property

demarcations and the ownership of land to which the people agreed. Further he told the people that he needed money to do the paperwork. The people having no money, he offered them an option. He told them that he would cut the trees and sell them. Later the paperwork was done and the thumb impressions were taken.

25 years later, the children of the villagers realized that they are no longer the owners of the land but Dattaram along with Chowgules are the sole owners of the village land!

The youngsters after realizing this tried their best to get back their land, but it was to no avail. The villagers have seen a shift from self-dependency to the present situation of dependency. From the owners now we are tenants. Our land has been taken away and we have become landless. Coconuts, Chilies, Millet are no longer cultivated in the village. At present the mine has been given on lease.

I am Sunita Velip. I have four sisters and a brother. I come from the village of Cazur, Quepem, Goa.

My village lies on the mountain slope, and does not have a proper road. We have to walk for an hour to get to the nearest bus stand. To carry our produce to our homes it is very inconvenient. For water we have to walk a big distance, and stand in queue wasting a lot of time. The children of our village and Corla the neighboring village that lies at a higher level face a lot of hardships to get to school. The children have to leave home for school at 6.30 in the morning and return around 3.30 in the afternoon on hungry stomach. This discourages children to pursue their studies. Hence many youngsters are seen at unlicensed bars where initially alcohol is offered free of cost. At the age of 14, I had to leave school because of my alcoholic father and was forced to work on the mining site to support my family, and educated my younger sisters. I used to work in the mines where rest time was prohibited. I worked for 8 hours a day where I along with the other girls and women had to face a lot a hardship. Life at the mining site was difficult without even time to answer nature call, especially in the difficult days of the month. If we had to even drink water, we used to drink it as we walk to the pit. While working there I suffered from skin problems and regular headache. My village does not even have sub-health Centre, where I could treat myself.

Ms. Asrita Deogam

The next Speaker, Ms. Asrita Deogam, is associated with the organization Purana Chaibasa Sangharsh Samiti in Jharkhand. Ms. Asrita presented the struggles against mining in her district.

Ms. Asrita highlighted the ways in which mining companies exploit and take advantage of the Adivasis' innocence and ignorance. The mining companies give false promises of development and lure the Adivasis into giving away their land and other traditional rights for mining purposes.

She said that initially in her area, as the villagers were unaware of the situation, they sold their land to the mining companies in the hope of better prospects. The adivasis never thought that this meant displacement, loss of access to land and resources. In turn the mining company severely exploited the labourers from the communities. Having lost their land and being exploited by the companies, the adivasis realized that that the only way to address this situation was to get together. A collective voice is continuously being raised now against the exploitation meted out by mining companies.

To conclude Ms. Asrita said that the only solution to this whole issue of mining is unity. The Adivasis have to come together and raise voices against all kinds of exploitation collectively. They should

not succumb to the demands of the mining company and get lured by their false promises. She stressed that this is a constant struggle against mining companies and the need for more struggle groups to come together and check the exploitation against the Adivasis.

Mr. Manmadha Rao

Mr. Manmadha Rao represented the Adivasis from Visakhapatnam district in Andhra Pradesh. He has been working for the tribal people who live in the Scheduled Areas of the state, on several issues like mining, land acquisition and displacement. So far the tribals have been successful in ensuring that the private mining companies closed down their operations and new ones could not enter their villages.

He narrated incidences of how mining companies are trying to gain inroads into their district and it is only the constant resistance from people that no mining has been able to commence in these areas. Initiatives such as exposure visits to mine affected regions in Orissa, campaigns; rallies, etc were organized, to enable the tribals to understand the harmful effects of mining on people's lands and livelihoods.

In 1991, Indian Rayon and Industries, a Birla Company had acquired the tribal lands to start mining. In the year 1994, they sent bulldozers to destroy their lands and houses and tried to evict them. But the people, especially women, showed strong resistance. The company started building a road for the mining project and when the people protested, it tried to project them as anti-development. The people maintained that only the Government and no one else could lay roads and that the road was being laid with public funds not for their benefit but for the company to ply its trucks.

The resistance against mining has strengthened due to more and more women coming out in the open and joining the struggle. Women have become bold enough to express their anguish about the proposed mining and actively participate in rallies, campaigns, public meetings and other forms of protest. Women in our area have gained courage to speak to the District Collector and other officials, to participate in meetings, public demonstrations and to question the injustices being suffered by them.

To conclude, he said that at times men fall into the trap and get lured by the false promises made by the companies. But the women are stronger and give no scope for any other influence. Hence he stressed the greater need for women to join the struggles against mining. As women are the most affected due to mining, they have to come together and be part of the struggle.



Health effects of Mining - Jaduguda, Jharkhand

Session - III

Labour and Health Issues of Women in Mining

Background Paper - Women and Health

Mining from a gender perspective in India has to address a crucial area women's health. The health hazards and degeneration of the health conditions of women and children is one of the most serious impacts of mining. Here, women's health has to be understood from a larger perspective of direct and indirect impacts - the exposure of women and children to mine disasters and mine pollution as well as to the reduction in quality of life due to denial of access to food security, natural resources and livelihoods. In India, this poses a much more dangerous situation as impacts of mining have been diverse depending on the nature of the minerals extracted and the extent of exploitation.

Despite people suffering from several forms of ill health, physical and mental deformities, constant exposure to toxic wastes and chronic diseases as a result of mining, there is a tragic gap in the availability of 'scientific' studies and data on the health hazards of mining in India and more so on the women in mining affected communities. This has provided an ideal opportunity for mining industries to walk away from any responsibility towards the health of communities and workers they affect.

The apathy, lack of understanding and political will and gross corruption of the government enhances the scope of the industry to continue with impunity. As health issues are considered 'technical' and 'scientific', the complaints and evidence from communities and workers of the relationship between mining operations and their ill health are brushed under the carpet by the law implementing, monitoring and judicial authorities, on the pretext of improper and inadequate scientific corroboration.

Pitted against these forces are the women in the mining regions, whose health issues in general also, are marginally addressed in the country. Our development policies, especially in the context of economic activities like mining do not take into account, women's health as important indices for human growth and development. Hence mining is one of the largest 'sustainable' industries. How true is this in the context of Indian women rural, tribal and urban poor who cannot articulate the victimization of their bodies for the extraction of minerals?

Health Impacts of Mining on Women in Communities : Living in the midst of dust and sewages

Majority of the health problems in mining regions are caused due to unchecked pollution and high levels of toxicity, mine tailings and mine disasters. The health and safety problems vary from one mineral to the other, from the technology used, type of mining- open cast to underground - and the size of operations. The lands, water bodies, air and environment are polluted due to constant release of chemical wastes, dust generated by blasting and excavation, and the dumping of mine wastes and over-burden in the surrounding lands and rivers.

Even women and children who are not working in the mines are constantly exposed to various respiratory illnesses due to inhalation of dust particles and become victims of skin diseases, experience malfunctioning of various sensory organs, which has a long-term impact on their reproductive health. Noise and dust pollution affects women the most during pregnancy. For economic reasons, they have no

choice but to expose themselves and their children to severe health risks, which not only threatens their lives, but also that of the fetuses. For example, the most common diseases suffered by people due to the dust from the coal mines are tuberculosis, cough and cold, malaria, skin diseases, diarrhoea, staining of teeth, joints pain, arthritis, lethargy, etc.

Another example is mica where dust is the major cause of respiratory problems among mica miners. Diseases such as arthritis, is normally present after the age of 50, but in the mica mining areas in Andhra Pradesh, even 20 year olds complain of arthritis. There is a definite correlation between mica dust and the disorders. The range of health hazards of women in mining varies from simple coughs to thalasemia, silicosis and other fatal ailments.

Further, the effects of chemicals and radiation from the ores has direct impacts on the women's health. For example, one of the most serious impacts has been the suffering of women living in the proximity of uranium mines in Jaduguda (Jharkhand) where radiation levels are scientifically proved to be above permissible limits and where there is a direct correlation between the reproductive and health problems of women to that of radiation from uranium. Here, despite the depressing situation of miscarriages, giving births to physically and mentally deformed children, deaths and terminal illnesses like leukemia and thalasemia, and despite international lobbying and publicity on this issue our government chooses to disrespect and continue the abuse of women's health. On the contrary, Adivasi women are expected to take national pride in sacrificing their health for the larger 'national security' concerns of India.

In a research undertaken in East Parej called Environmental and Health Impact Assessment due to coal mining in East Parej and North Karanpura coal field of Jharkhand state, by Dr. Nitish Priyadarshi, it was found that metals like fluoride, manganese, nickel, and sulphate are high in concentration in drinking water. They are nearer to the toxic levels while Manganese has crossed the toxic level in North Karanpura coalfield. The study assessed that metals like arsenic, mercury, fluoride, nickel and chromium may cause problems to the human beings even if they are present in trace amount in the drinking water. In an article published by Down To Earth, it was found that Damodar River and its tributary have been polluted by Arsenic and Mercury, two of the lethal minerals. In Lapan Tandi village of East Parej there are high amounts of Sulphate above the toxic level and wells contain nickel nearer to toxic levels. Iron concentrations were found to be very high in surface water of North Karanpura.

As a result of these toxic wastes in the water and soils, it was found that the longevity of the communities living in the coal mines has reduced drastically. The average longevity of women was found to be 45 and in most of the villages only one or two women had crossed the age of 60! The number of deaths in a period of five years also reveals shocking figures in Dudhmatia village: 6 out of average 80 people, in Agariatola village: 12 out of average 100 people, in Lapangtandi: 13 out of average 115 people, and in Ulhara: 9 (seven were children) out of average 80 people. Majority of the children are reported to be lethargic as a result of inhalation of toxic dust and consumption of contaminated water.

Water - The Scourge

Communities surrounding mine-sites are forced to consume the contaminated drinking water from sources like rivers, streams, wells and bore pumps due to ill-treated or non-treated chemical wastes and debris by the mining companies which seep into the ground water and soil. Women in particular are more susceptible to water pollution due to the role they play in the family, which involves contact with water sources for performing the household chores like collecting water, washing clothes, utensils and bathing children.

For example the Chromite mines in Orissa have caused severe health problems due to the contamination of rivers. A study commissioned by the Regional Research Laboratory (RRL), Bhubaneswar revealed that mine seepage water released into the Domsala river in the Sukhinda valley has severely affected the lives of communities as the Domsala river is the main source for many people in the area. The Hexavalent chromium present in this water causes marked irritation of the respiratory tract, nasal septum ulcers, and also causes irritant dermatitis rhinitis, bronchospasm and pneumonia. Children with sores all over the body are a common sight. The study further revealed that chromium has entered the food chain and has been found in edible plants especially mango and paddy, and in meat and fish.

In Andhra Pradesh water contamination in the areas surrounding the mica mines have given rise to several health hazards such as nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea and eosinophilia, silicosis and tuberculosis.

The depletion of ground water due to over consumption for mining purposes bringing serious changes in the water table affects the irrigation and drinking water facilities of the communities. In many places, companies set up treatment plants which do not function and the situation deteriorates to such an extent that the ground water cannot be used for human consumption any longer and sometimes villages 'voluntarily' relocate or migrate as has happened in Chattisgarh.

Villagers have no alternative but to drink the water of the wells provided by the miners which people often complain of foulness in taste, colour and with filth in the contents. Areas of large-scale mining are facing acute scarcity of water mainly in summer and in winter season. Dug wells generally get dried up in these two seasons. Natural drainage system is obstructed and diverted due to dumping of overburden and expansion of opencast mines

At times companies supply drinking water by trucks to the local communities as they draw up all the ground water. This dependence on the companies leads to a situation where the communities have to constantly fight with the management for regular and adequate supply of water creating a situation of conflict. Women and children spend a large part of their time and energies waiting in queues for water and which also results in reduction in water consumption by the women due to rationing of water supplies.

The women are thus forced to lead unhygienic lives by not bathing daily, not washing clothes regularly and not drinking water adequately. This is one of the most common situations in any of the coalmines in India as reported in a study conducted in East Parej coal washeries where the study revealed that due to water contamination the villagers avoid taking bath everyday, and that there is a gap of 5 to 10 days. Clothes are kept unclean and washed infrequently. Children are the most affected due to living in such unhygienic conditions and filth.

The water scourge also leads to social ill-health as tensions build up among the women every day while collecting the meager and uncertain supply of water in the slums and shanty towns of the mine-sites.

Blasting and Mine Accidents

Communities living around the mine sites are constantly vulnerable to mining accidents. Mining companies use explosives for blasting which result in houses cracking and collapsing on women and children or when companies do not warn them of explosions while they are working in the fields or walking in their villages, thereby either killing or deforming them. Similarly, companies leave behind large mine pits around the houses and agricultural fields, which gradually get filled with contaminated water and debris and result in children and women (and even most often, livestock) accidentally falling into them and drowning

or getting fatally injured. Companies rarely have taken responsibility for such accidents nor paid up for the losses or treatment. Especially when women get injured or disabled it becomes most difficult to eke out a living or look after the children when the men are away in the mine-pits.

Health Conditions of Women Mine Workers

Women are employed in secondary activities such as cutting, sorting, quarrying and loading and unloading. Constant contact with dust and pollution and indirectly through contamination of water, air, etc cause severe health hazards to the women mineworkers. As majority of the women workers are contract labourers, and paid on a daily wage basis there is no economic security or compensation paid due to loss of workdays on account of health problems. Meager or no compensation is given during pregnancy period that puts a strain on incomes and health. Even during pregnancy women have to work in hazardous conditions amidst noise, air pollution that have adverse affects on their offsprings.

The work conditions, work timings, leave facilities, etc have significant impact on women's health. Children are also unsafe and indirectly affected right from conception and birth as women are forced to take their children to the mining areas and expose them to high levels of dust, pollution, mine explosives and accidents.

The women suffer from several occupational illnesses such as respiratory problems, silicosis, tuberculosis, leukemia, asbestosis, arthritis, etc. Infant mortality rates have increased and the reproductive health of women has reduced which has given rise to related social problems. Lack of proper illumination, safety nets and equipment causes severe strain to women workers' health.

For example, in the Chromite mines of Orissa, the women complained of several health problems. The regular women workers, who are very few in number, were paid a meager Rs.10 per month for health benefits. Compensation for pregnant women was somewhere between Rs.2000- Rs.3000 if she is directly employed by the company, while the contractors pay a paltry Rs.500 at their discretion. The mines are damp and any ingestion of chromium causes gastrointestinal bleeding. Tuberculosis and asthma are common ailments. Hexavalent chromium is known to adversely affect women's health as it is teratogenic, causing birth defects in fetuses, embryo toxic, causes still birth, reduces fertility and is further excreted through breast milk.

Loss of eyesight is common, as women are not given any protective gear in any of the mine-sites whether stone crushing, chromite, quarrying or while loading and transporting mineral ores like coal manually. In some places they are given iron and mineral supplements injected into them in order to increase their work output and to build up resistance for the hard labour. Apart from terminal illnesses, a more concurrent and chronic problem of women working in mines is the development of muscular and back pains, wearing out of joints, arthritis and spondilosis, numbness, fatigue and lack of stamina, breathlessness, constant coughs, irritation in the eyes and a general physical incapacity.

In many unorganized mines the mine owners take very young people and there is a high rate of turnover and retrenchment so that any terminal or chronic health problems that the workers may suffer cannot be traced to the companies by government or researchers. Interestingly, in a study undertaken by National Institute of Occupational Health, on the Asbestos mines in Cuddapah district of Andhra Pradesh, majority of the mine workers were women and young girls who were retrenched within a few years and were reported to have migrated to Dubai and other places when the mine owners were questioned.

It is also difficult to medically prove the association of certain mine induced illnesses and diseases as in the unorganized sector labourers keep shifting between different forms of livelihood like agriculture, construction work, etc and rarely are available for longitudinal studies. Companies try to hide the true conditions of workers' health and attribute their illnesses to addictions like alcoholism and smoking. Hence, silicosis, asbestosis and other respiratory illnesses are medically diagnosed as tuberculosis or other such illnesses incurred by workers from alcohol, by the mining companies and government hospitals so as to deflect any direct correlation to the mine specific pollution and toxicity.

Sexual Exploitation

In some mining communities discrimination is made towards employing mostly unmarried women and girls, the rational being, they are healthier, stronger and do not have much of family burden. They are also easy prey to the contractors, mining officials and other mineworkers who do not bring their families along and sexually exploit the local women. The women for fear of further harassment and loss of employment rarely report sexual exploitation. Serious health problems such as AIDS and other communicable diseases which are uncommon among the tribal communities are becoming rampant in mining towns both among women mine labourers and among women in the communities to whom these diseases are transmitted from the men.

Women living in the mining regions are highly susceptible to sexual assaults when going to the forest or while walking to their fields or just while living in their homes. Such atrocities on women mostly by migrant mine workers, contractors, mine owners and even higher-level management staff are common in mining towns. Many of the grass-roots groups and communities in the mining regions have identified this as a cause for serious concern.

For instance, in a remote tribal area of Vizag district in A.P where Indian Rayons and Industries was laying a road for a calcite mining project, women complained of sexual assaults and gang rapes by the company and the Border Roads Organisation which was constructing the road. In spite of several representations to the local authorities, there was total apathy towards the situation.

In some cases, when social action groups expose the misdeeds, the local authorities hastily pay a meager compensation and hush up the issue. The mining regions have a widespread problem of unwed mothers, deserted women, concubines of the contractors, etc who find it difficult to eke out a living for themselves and their children leading to death of infants due to malnourishment. A universal phenomenon in all mining regions is the flourishing of the flesh trade as women are forced into prostitution as the only means of 'assured' livelihood.

Deterioration in health status due to loss of livelihoods and access to natural resources

A comparative study of pre-mining and post mining communities especially in Adivasi regions shows a clear shift in livelihoods and way of life particularly for women in the affected communities. Displacement from land and loss of access to forests has a direct impact on the health and nutrition of women and children. In traditional land and forest-based form of livelihood, the communities had access to a wide variety of agricultural and forest produce as Adivasi communities have basically consumption oriented economy.

The diversity of crops grown by Adivasis are a means of ensuring balanced nutrition which is supplemented by the variety of forest species like tubers, roots, leaves, fruits and nuts collected by the

women and children. Since access to food is not dependent on cash flow as against the need to purchase even basic food items in a non- agriculture and forest based economy like mining, women have better access to food security in traditional systems.

In mining situations, women are completely thrown out of their economic roles and as they are forced to depend mainly on the wages of the men, they have lesser cash flow and lesser participation in decision-making on food and household expenditures. On the face of it, mining towns look affluent as even the poor purchase assets like radios, television sets, furniture, clothes and other commodities. A greater part of the incomes are also spent away by the men on vices like alcohol, gambling and sexual exploits. Studies have proved that there is lesser expenditure on basic food items as money is frittered away by the men on wasteful commodities. The obvious victims are women in the families who sacrifice their food and medical needs for making both ends meet from within the wages spared by the men.

The forest cover degenerates gradually in all mining regions due to pressure from mining operations considered by the state till 1983.

The 1993 National Mineral Policy addresses the issue of adverse effects of mining on the environment and recycling of metallic scrap and mineral waste. The Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoFF) has identified mining and ore beneficiation along with asbestos and asbestos based industries as heavily polluting industries. Legal provisions related to the abandonment and restoration of mines has also been laid down by the Constitution. The Mineral Conservation and Development Rules (1988) in Article 23 has laid down conditions for the abandonment of any mine and has specified the need for providing a plan for dealing with the environment. The section on environment clearly states that the mining company should take all possible precautions for the protection and control of pollution during the mining and post mining operations.

The law states that the holder of a prospecting license or a mining lease shall take steps so that the overburden, waste rock, rejects and fines generated during prospecting and mining operations or tailings, slimes and fines produced during sizing, sorting and beneficiation or metallurgical operations shall be stored in separate dumps. Further, the dumps have to be properly secured to prevent escape of material in harmful quantities, which may cause degradation of environment, and to prevent causation of floods. The site for dumps, tailings or slimes has to be selected as far as possible on impervious ground to ensure minimum leaching effects due to precipitation.

The law further lays guidelines to restore or protect the flora of the area under the mining lease and nearby areas, technically, economically and environmentally. The law states that every holder of prospecting license or mining lease shall undertake the phased restoration, reclamation and rehabilitation of lands affected by prospecting or mining operations and shall complete this work before the conclusion of such operations and the abandonment or prospect of abandonment of the mine.

The Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981 (14 of 1981) and the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 (29 of 1986) states that air pollution due to fines, dust, smoke or gaseous emissions during prospecting, mining, beneficiation or metallurgical operations and related activities shall be controlled and kept within " Permissible Limits". This permissible limit is highly debatable and controversial issue.

Despite these laws protecting the environment and safety of the mine workers, their situation has

little changed or improved nor has there been any benefits provided to them either during their work or during accidents or disasters.

Critical Issues

- While none of the existing legislations have ever provided justice to communities suffering from health problems due to mining, there are no laws which specifically protect the rights of women's health in mining, either as communities or as workers.
- Occupational health issues of women mine workers need to be addressed urgently. No proper medical records are maintained, no health check-ups are conducted either by the companies or governments. Moreover, occupational illnesses are suppressed and workers are promptly retrenched when health problems are detected.
- Women are forced to work in mine-sites where certain minerals have been banned as they have been proved to be too hazardous for human exposure. Women are found in asbestos mines in the name of soapstone. The Mineral policy should review the extraction and processing of certain toxic and hazardous minerals like Asbestos, Uranium and consider the social, health and environmental impacts of these minerals vis-à-vis their economic or foreign exchange values.
- If women are working mainly in the small scale mines, government has to look into the laws, technology and management accountability towards women miners' health. The question here is, does technology have the answers?
- A non agriculture based system alienates women from the food security, rights over natural resources and leads to deterioration of their health status. How do governments, policy makers and civil society groups define and implement development and human growth vis-à-vis economic programmes from a gender perspective, especially in the area of health.
- While health issues like AIDS are causing great concern as the most widespread future threat and large allocations from governments and external grants/loans are concentrated in AIDS eradication, there is a corresponding increase in opening up more areas for mining which has a direct relationship to the growth of AIDS. There is no adequate information or medical check up for identifying and controlling the spread of AIDS in mining regions when the global mining industry itself has admitted that 30-40 percent of all mining towns in the world have AIDS.
- Women and children are constantly exposed to high risks of death and terminal illnesses due to constant exposure to dust and pollution. Studies have proved that their exposure to various hazardous pollutants has been far above permissible levels. Yet no companies have ever been held legally responsible for such mass abuse of these vulnerable groups.
- What monitoring mechanisms can government set up in order to ensure better health and safety of women and children in mining regions and therefore, how viable are most of the mining industries from a health perspective? And how do we make companies accountable to workers, communities and to civil society?

The second day's session addressed the labour and health issues of women in mining. The session on health raised problems of health hazards of women in communities and in the mine-pits, corporate accountability to environment and health issues and identifying policy and legal issues on women's health in mining.

The session on labour examined women's participation in mine labour, implications of privatization

and mechanization in mining on women workers, new economic policy and gender issues in mine labour, women's position in existing and abandoned mines, comparative analysis of gender situations in traditional agrarian economies vis-à-vis mining economies.

Dr. S.K. Dave

Dr. S.K. Dave is the Director of National Institute of Miner's Health, Nagpur, a Government of India undertaking. He has done extensive research on occupational health diseases in the mining sector. His efforts to bring to light the hazardous effects of Asbestos mining and other unorganised sector mines have been fruitful in bringing about safety standards in asbestos mining and also closure of a few mines. Dr S.K Dave gave a brief presentation on the occupational health hazards of mineworkers, especially in the context of asbestos mining.

Dr. Dave presented his study on asbestos mining in Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh. The study revealed that despite awareness regarding the harmful effects of asbestos, women employed in the crushing process of asbestos rock were poorly equipped. A subsequent study of the mining unit of Andhra Pradesh Mineral Development Corporation resulted in the closure of 2 of its units. India has an acute problem of asbestos mining and he mentioned that the government officials have to take serious steps to close down asbestos mining.

Dr. Dave then proceeded to give some examples of health hazards associated with various minerals and the common health problems of mineworkers. The Mining industry accounts for the highest rate of fatal injuries. In the coal mining sector 3 out of 100 people suffer from silicosis. Gold and mica mining gives rise to serious health problems among the mineworkers. Manganese mining is associated with Parkinson's disease, psychosis, mental problems and so on. The general problems that mineworkers complain from are muscular problems, cramps, fatigue, and back problems. Noise pollution in the mines results in acute deafness. Poor illumination in the underground mines results in blindness among the mineworkers.

To conclude, he mentioned that health problems are a major issue in the unorganised sector and government is ignorant of the same. Further, the shift to open cast mining has more serious implications on health, compared to underground mining. Before employing workers in mines, there has to be a physical examination that has to comply with certain norms. The mineworkers have to be examined every six months to one year. Periodic medical checkup of the mineworkers have to be made compulsory. The extent of permissible noise and dust pollution levels in the mines, as prescribed by the Mines Act, has to be adhered to.

This is the only way to provide evidence and proof that the health problems arise due to the occupation and poor working conditions in the mines. The government has to be sensitized to take initiatives and address the health problems in the unorganised sector, conduct studies that link health problems to the occupation. In turn the people's struggles have to constantly lobby for workers' rights, safe working conditions and the environment in which they live in, especially in the unorganised sector.

Dr. Quemur Rehaman

Dr. Rehaman works with the Industrial Toxicology Research Centre. Her work involves research on the diseases caused by asbestos and other ultra fine particles. Dr. Rehaman has done extensive work on asbestos workers. The other area where she has done work is indoor pollution. She presented the status of asbestos workers in India.

Asbestos Mining in India

India produces around 2000 tonnes of Asbestos per month. There are 30 asbestos mines in operation in India, mainly concentrated in Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan. Combining the organized and unorganized sector, the total employment in asbestos mining is 8 lakh workers. Women are generally employed in the milling activity in this sector.

Asbestos is a very strong fibre and inhalation of asbestos causes lung cancer. Till date, there is no cure for diseases associated with asbestos and it completely destroys the immune system. Further the fibres multiply and spread all over the body, slowly destroying the whole human system. There are two types of asbestos - Ancebole and serpentine. The asbestos found in Rajasthan is of the Ancebole variety. It has high concentration of fibre and when inhaled is sure to cause death. The asbestos found in Andhra Pradesh has 42% serpentine content while that in Rajasthan, the chromolite content is 58%.

A Study conducted in 2002 on asbestos mining in Rajasthan revealed that the situation is deteriorating. There seemed to be no change in the working conditions over the past decade. Women wear no masks or protective dress to cover them. It was found that workers contacted the disease within 5 years of exposure and death occurs within 7-8 years of exposure. The workers are totally ignorant of the harmful effects or the risks associated with asbestos mining. People not directly in contact with asbestos are also being affected and the disease is spreading to their families, especially the children. It was found that the disease develops within 5 years of exposure in 42% of cases. 12% of the workers examined suffered from asbestosis.

There is not much of a difference in the communicability to the diseases among workers in the organised and unorganised sector. In the organised sector the disease comes into light after 15-30 years, while in the unorganised, it is much faster. Women are the worst affected as they are highly prone to additional indoor pollution which has its implications in health. For. Eg. According to the World Health Organization, developing countries have the highest indoor pollution and around 2.5 to 2.6 million women die every year due to indoor pollution.

Conclusion

The Government of India has prescribed that the presence of asbestos in the atmosphere (air) should not exceed 0.5 fibre per mm. We have found it to be hundred times higher high intake of asbestos. There is absolutely no information or education imparted on asbestos. It is the duty of the Government of India to inform and educate people about asbestos mining.

Dr. T.K. Joshi

Dr. T.K. Joshi spoke on Occupational hazards and the problems associated with identifying occupational health hazards.

Dr. Joshi gave an overview of occupational health problems and how it is often neglected. He emphasized that in diagnosing the cause of diseases, doctors often fail to associate the cause of the disease to the occupation. The fact that the occupation could be the main cause of the disease is hardly considered in the diagnosis. Dr. Joshi stressed the need for more detailed research on occupational health problems especially in hazardous industries. Steps have to be taken to ensure that this is minimized. He stressed that the industries should follow the standards and checks laid out by the government.

To conclude he said that women, by nature are more prone to occupational problems more so in the mining sector. Further, in the absence of protective gadgets and other preventive measures, women are even more immune to health problems. He stressed that women have to understand the occupational health problems and take preventive measures accordingly.

Dr. Nitish Priyadarshi

Dr. Nitish Priyadarshi has conducted several independent researches on toxic elements, and their effects due to presence in the environment. He spoke on the environmental and water pollution in the coal mining areas of Jharkhand and its impacts on people.

Dr. Nitish said that the Damodar River is highly polluted with toxics released from the coalmines. Despite several notices and complaints to the company, it has always maintained that the river Damodar is not polluted. A sample taken from R.Damodar revealed that it is highly toxic and has a high content of arsenic, fluoride, nickel and, Sulphate. Sulphate causes severe burning sensations in the stomach and diarrhea. Arsenic associated diseases like nausea is also reported in these coal-mining areas. The companies violate the Environmental Laws and the government does not take any initiatives to check the pollution levels.

An important point that Dr.Nitish made is that despite companies asserting that the pollution emitted are well within the permissible limits, there will be a time when this will reach above the limits. The companies do not take responsibility towards the environmental pollution caused by them. Dr. Nitish made a suggestion that the companies have to take initiatives to inform people about the pollutants. People then could develop their own local solutions and take precautions from being affected. A simple example that he quoted was that if the people were informed that the water they consume is contaminated, they would automatically develop their own indigenous methods to make it safe for use. Thus creating awareness, educating and informing people about the environmental pollution are of prime importance.

Ms. Ajitha Susan George

Ms. Ajitha Susan George works for JOHAR, Jharkhandi's Organization for Human Rights. They work with mining affected people in the Uranium mines of Jharkhand. She is also associated with the BIRSA- Bindra Institute for Research Study and Action, which is based in West Singhbhum district.

Jadugoda is located about 20 km southeast of Jamshedpur, the Steel city of the Tatas. This is the only current functioning uranium mine in the country, situated in the homeland of the Santhal people. The Jadugoda mining complex consists of Jadugoda, Bhatin and Narwapahar mines, where Uranium is mined 1600-2000 ft. below the surface. These mines are all located within 10km. distance of each other. Mining operations started in Jadugoda in 1962. In India, the extraction and production of uranium is still a state monopoly and this mining complex is operated by the Uranium Corporation of India Ltd, which comes directly under the Department of Atomic Energy.

The grade of uranium ore mined from here is low - 0.05 to 0.06%. After the ore is mined, it is sent to the mill, where it is purified through a chemical process called leaching. In 1994-5, the mill had an installed capacity of 1350 tonnes. In addition to the ores from Jadugoda mining complex, the mill also processes pre-concentrates from the uranium recovery plants at the Rakha, Surda and Mosabani copper

mines. Acid or alkali (depending on the pH of the ore) is poured over heaps of the ore, which takes the uranium concentrate to the bottom. This uranium concentrate, commonly called 'yellow cake' is sent to the Nuclear Fuel Complex in Hyderabad for further purification into fuel rods.

After extraction of the yellow cake, the left over sands called uranium tailings are mixed with water and flushed to the tailing dam through pipes. There are a dozen radioactive materials in this waste besides uranium, which are extremely harmful to living beings. The most important of these are Thorium-230, Radium-226, Radon-222 and the Radon progeny, including Polonium 210. These highly radioactive tailings have a very long life or rather, half-life, going into tens of thousands of years. Besides these radioactive elements, heavy metals are also present in the tailings, like lead, zinc, manganese, cadmium and arsenic, whose toxicity does not reduce with time.

The ores are brought to the Jadugoda mill in open trucks, with workers sitting over them, passing through villages en route. Some times loose rocks fall on the roads. The pre-concentrates that are brought in the form of slurry in open trucks also keeps falling on roads. The production of uranium ore is 200 tons per year, but the tailings amount to 330,000 tons of rock per year. UCIL maintains that about 50% of this waste is back-filled into mine cavities. While the third tailing pond was being constructed, it was observed that the rock tailings were used for building the embankments. The rock tailings are also used as building material for houses, road construction and filling of holes in the fields etc. The remaining dusty tailing is mixed with water and pumped through pipe line to the tailing pond.

The tailing ponds of Jadugoda have become the nuclear waste dump for the whole country. Nuclear waste from various installations including the Nuclear Fuel Complex in Hyderabad and hospitals are brought to Jadugoda for disposal. Two tailing ponds have become full and now dumping is going on in the third tailing pond. All these tailing ponds were built on the rice fields belonging to the indigenous people. There is no clay cover or concrete bed in any of the tailing ponds nor are tailings kept under water as required under international standards. Most of the liquid waste from these mines, mills and tailing dam eventually land up in the small streams and rivulets feeding into the Subarnarekha river.

Let us look at the known health effects of some of the heavy metals that are present in Jadugoda.

Arsenic

High levels of inorganic arsenic in food or water can be fatal. Arsenic damages many tissues including nerves, stomach, intestines and skin. Breathing high levels of arsenic can cause a sore throat and irritated lungs. Lower levels of exposure to inorganic arsenic can cause

- Nausea, vomiting and diarrhea
- Decreased production of red and white blood cells
- Abnormal heart rhythm
- Blood vessel damage
- A 'pins and needles' sensation in hands and feet

Long-term exposure to inorganic arsenic can cause darkening of the skin and the appearance of small warts or corns. Direct skin contact may cause redness and swelling. Besides, arsenic is a known carcinogen. Breathing inorganic arsenic increases the risk of lung cancer, whereas ingestion increases the risk of skin cancer and tumours of the bladder, kidney, liver and lung.

Lead

Lead can affect almost every system in our body. The most sensitive is the central nervous system, particularly in children. Lead also damages kidneys and the immune system. The effects are the same whether it is breathed or swallowed. Exposure to lead is more dangerous for young and unborn children. Unborn children can be exposed to lead through their mothers. Harmful effects include premature births, smaller babies, decreased mental ability in the infant, learning difficulties and reduced growth in young children. These effects are more common after exposure to high levels of lead. In adults, lead may decrease reaction time, cause weakness in fingers, wrists or ankles, and possibly affect memory. Lead may cause anaemia, a disorder of the blood. It can cause abortion and damage the male reproductive system.

Nickel

The most common adverse health effect of nickel in humans is an allergic health reaction. The most common reaction is a skin rash at the site of contact. Some people who are sensitive to nickel have asthma attacks following exposure to nickel. Normally, people who are sensitive to nickel have reactions when it is in contact with the skin, some sensitized persons react when they ingest nickel through food, water or inhale dust containing it.

Lung effects including chronic bronchitis and reduced lung function have been observed in workers, who breathed large amounts of nickel. People who are not sensitive to it must ingest very large amounts of nickel to show adverse health effects. Nickel and certain nickel compounds may reasonably be anticipated to be carcinogens. Cancers of the lung and nasal sinus have resulted when workers breathed dust containing high levels of nickel compounds while working in nickel refineries or nickel processing plants. (This information is quoted from ATSDR 1997, U.S. Agency for Toxic substances and Diseases Registry: Tox FAQs)

Ms. Ajita also gave a brief presentation on the study they conducted in 1996 on women's reproductive health. The preliminary results of the study revealed that the rate of abortion was high among women, as also the mortality rate. The study revealed high levels of physical and mental retardation in the newborn babies. The rate of abortion among women was also found to be high. 20.2% of women within the age group of 14-45 had one or more abortion. Infant mortality, especially within a day to a week's birth, was also high. The study exposed the effects of uranium on women's health and facilitated in linking the health problems to uranium mining.

In conclusion, Ms. Ajitha raised an important point that the state does not conduct research to assess the health and environmental damage done to people due to mining. The grassroots organizations though being ill-equipped and lack resources, bring this to public notice. She then said that while all over the world the harmful effects of radiation is known, why then does the state allow for uranium mining.

Ms. Meenakshi Panda

Ms Meenakshi Panda is a lecturer in Political Sciences, University of Cuttack, Orissa. She is also associated with the organization Nari Surakya Samithi, Angol, for the past 10 years and worked with women in the affected areas. She presented the health problems of women in coal mines of Orissa.

Discussing the history of coal mining in Orissa, Ms. Meenakshi said that Orissa has around 41 coalmines and close to 4 lakh people from approximately 150 villages have been displaced due to coalmines.

The health status of people living within the radius of 10k.m of mines has deteriorated over the years due to mining. The air is highly polluted due to coal dust, trucks, dumpers and release of carbon dioxide gas in the air due to burning of coal. Around 4000 trucks ply everyday in the coal regions. The highly dependent rivers Brahmani and Subharnareka are badly polluted.

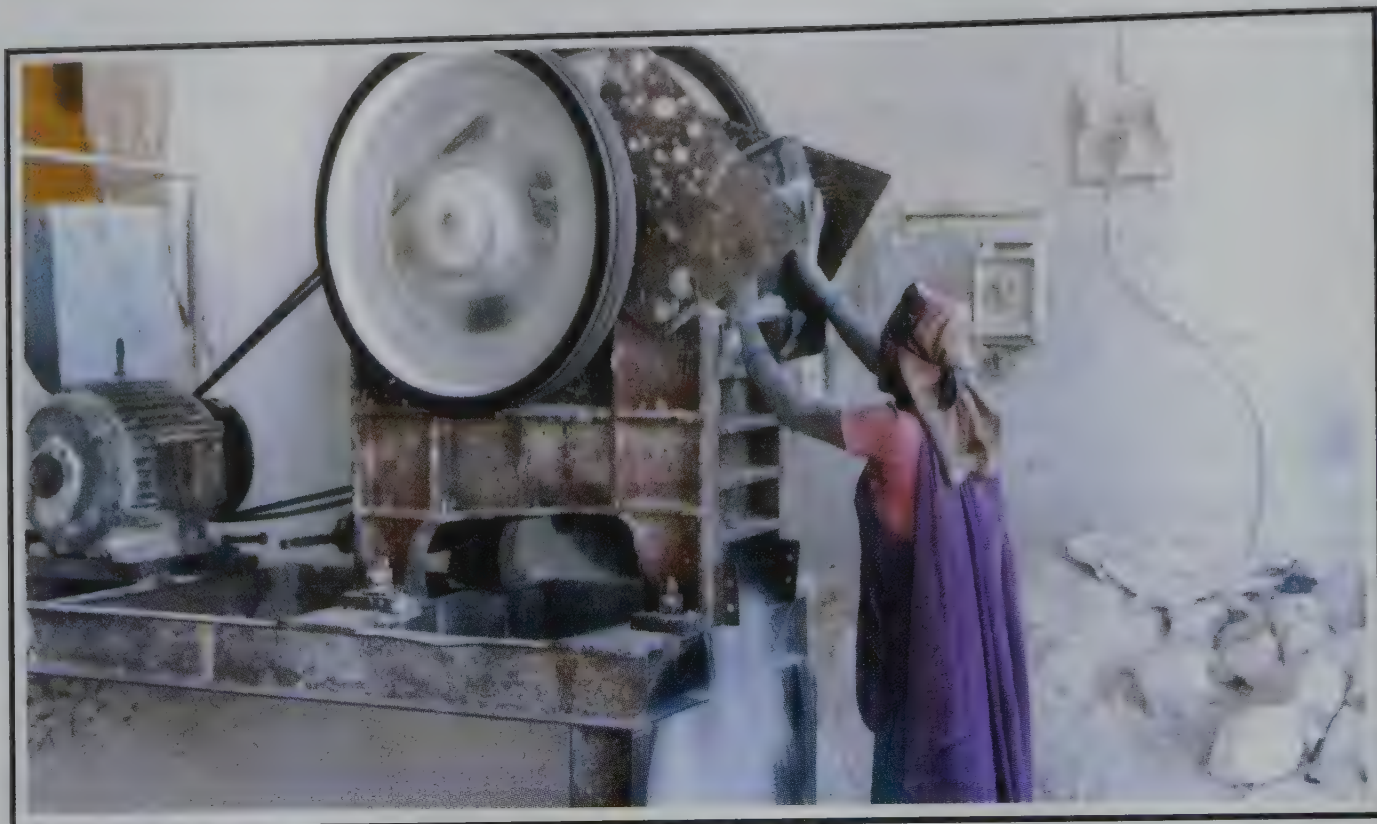
Due to the presence of coal dust and carbon dioxide gas in the atmosphere the temperature rises to 48- 50°C, in summer causing several deaths due to sunstroke. Further, permanent disability and decline in life expectancy is clearly observed in the coal mining areas. The workers do not report their illness as they lose their day's wages if they have to take leave and go to the hospital. The facilities at the hospitals were also found to be inadequate to address the health needs of the workers. Wide gaps exist between the hospital records and the people's record of their illness.

Health Effects

Constant exposure to coal dust causes lung cancer, TB, asthma, constant pain and breathlessness, abdominal disorder and reproduction problems. Lung infection is common among miners and referred to as black lungs. There is significant increase in the mortality rate of the working population. According to study conducted by Institute of Research, 3% of the people have high reproductive capacity. Due to blasting of mines, and dumpers, people are losing their concentration and memory power at an early age. Children and pregnant women are the worst affected due to pollution. It is believed that the environment is so polluted that its effects will be long lasting and generations will have to bear the brunt of it.

Exposure of lactating mothers to chemicals has its repercussions on the child's health. Malformation of the fetus and deformity are quite common among the newborn children. Women face severe problems during childbirth. Women constantly experience dizziness, heart failure, muscle pain and abdominal pain. Frequent blasting causes spontaneous abortions and high infant mortality. Displacement, insecurity of employment, poverty, and addiction to alcoholism has spread like a wild fire and is a major social problem in these areas. Alcohol addiction has become a disease in these areas.

To conclude, she stressed that there exists no systematic studies or data that links the health problems to the occupation, working conditions and pollution in the environment. Further systematic studies have to be done to identify the problems and quantify occupational diseases in the coal mines. The struggle groups have to build a strong pressure on the government to address these issues and let their voices be heard.



Asbestos Milling Unit, Rajasthan



Women in Mica Mines - Gudur, A.P.

Session - III

Background Paper - Women and Labour

Mining is a very patriarchal industry and the most hostile sector towards women. The historical myth globally that the presence of women in the mine pits leads to collapse of mines and death of miners itself resonates with the hostility and contempt towards women by the mining sector. If mining were to be defined as a development activity as our governments and the mining industry reiterate, we have to also analyse the economics of mining from the perspective of gender. Given our country's experience of extensive mining operations ranging from rat hole mining to large open-cast and under ground mines across different states, one has to closely examine what have been the benefits in the form of incomes, livelihoods and food security that women enjoy whether rural or urban, dalit or tribal.

In India, the greater negative impact of mining has been experienced by tribal and dalit women as most largescale mining activities have taken place in the tribal and forest regions. The changes, as a result, in the economic lives of these two sections of women, has been fatal. Where dalit women are concerned their already marginalized status in the Hindu mainstream society became further degraded while the status of tribal women has been completely transformed from a life of dignity to one of humiliation and deprivation.

Problems from the Mine-pits : Unending Web of Bondage

Women are rarely employed in any of the formal/organised, public or private sector mines as mining is a highly male dominated activity and women are considered unfit for the hard labour of working in the mines. They are prohibited from entering the underground mines while only the men are eligible for employment. Most of the jobs of women relate to either administrative or to menial lower rung activities like sweepers, cleaners or attendants in the mining offices. The Indian dress of the women does not suit the masculine work in the mines and therefore, only men are legally eligible for employment.

Labour Welfare Funds for Workers in Mining

- The Mica Labour Welfare Fund Act 1946
- The Limestone and Dolomite Mines Labour Welfare Fund Act 1972
- The Iron Ore Manganese ore and Chromite Ore Mines Labour Welfare Fund Act 1976

While the literacy rate for total Indian population is about 52.75% for male and 32.17% for female, the literacy levels of SC women is a mere 19% and for ST women is 14.50%. Especially in the mining rich states the literacy levels of women among ST's and SC's are abysmally poor. Rajasthan 3.46%, Andhra Pradesh- 6.88%, Orissa- 8.29% and Bihar/Jharkhand 11.75%. Such low literacy levels also speak for the abject poverty of women in these communities, which in turn shows their

vulnerability to remain in exploitative forms of labour like mining. It also reflects the inaccessibility of any skilled employment for them, in the absence of any educational opportunities.

The age-wise distribution of women mine workers in the country is an interesting indicator of women's exploitation in mining. In the age group of 5-14, women form 40% of the workforce, in the 15-19 age-group, they form 27% and there is a corresponding decrease as the age of women increases. While it is not to say that exploitation of male children is desirable, the fact that girl child labour is employed on a large scale in mining is a ground for serious concern.

Work Opportunities for Women Displaced by Mining Projects

Even among the communities who are displaced by mining projects, rehabilitation programmes of the government and the industry overlook the need for providing livelihood for the women who have been thrown out of their economic activities. It is always the husband, father, brother or son or any male relatives of the household who are eligible for employment in the mining companies. For example, a study by Walter Fernandes and others (Fernandes and Raj 1992: 141-142) reveals that in Orissa where the largest public sector mining company NALCO had promised to provide a job for every family displaced and, although 80% of the families affected were given jobs, only 8 women got employment. Although the T.N Singh Committee in 1967 stipulated that public sector mines and industries should give a job for every family displaced, invariably the jobs went to the men alone.

Where displaced women were absorbed into mining related activities, it is mostly in the small private or unorganized sector where women are the first to be retrenched, have no work safety measures, are susceptible to serious health hazards which also affects their reproductive health, and are exposed to sexual exploitation. Women displaced by mining and their livelihoods or migrant women who live in mining areas are 'self employed' in the mines. This is mostly illegal if not unorganised and the best term to describe their status is 'scavengers of mining'. They face constant harassment from the mining companies, police and politicians for eking out this meagre form of livelihood. Besides, as they are scavengers, they work in totally unprotected working conditions. Women in the gold mines of Kolar work with mercury and cyanide with their bare hands and are prone to accidents within the dank pools of water.

It is this shift from traditional economies where women had a relatively better control over their bodies and natural resources in their traditional form of livelihood, whether agriculture or collection of forest produce, to a life in mining, where they are pitted against prohibitory labour conditions, vagaries of the markets, and lack of any alternatives, that brings in an entire change in their livelihoods and social life.

Trends in Labour and Wages of Women in Mining

According to the Ministry of Labour's Statistical Profile of Women and Labour, in its Fifth Issue (1998), employment of women in open cast mines and above ground works has steadily declined between 1961 and 1993 while the overall employment in these areas has gone up during the period. The report says that this is indicative of the fact that female workers have been substituted by the male ones and also that the share of women in the total employment in coal mines has declined from 6.3 percent during 1981 to 4.05 percent in 1992. Similarly, in all the mines put together, the share of women workers was 9.8 percent in 1981 and has slid down to 6.65 percent in 1992. In addition, it also states that the women's participation in all industrial groups has gone up except for Mines and Quarries during the period between 1980 and 1989. Under the Mining and Quarrying sector, the percentage of female workers to the total female population has consistently declined from 1.02 percent in 1901 to 0.05 percent by 1991.

With regard to wages, the Ministry's data reveals that although average wages of mine workers in open cast and above ground mines increased sharply in the last three decades, there is a distinct difference in the increase between wages for men and that of women in the majority of the mines/states. This is attributed to the fact that women were employed mainly in the unskilled or low skilled jobs compared to the men. Also, the Fifth Occupational Wage Survey found that women workers were not employed in Oil mines.

Percentage of Female main Workers to Total Female Population under Mining and Quarrying From 1901 to 1991 Census :

Census Year	Mining and Quarrying (%)
1901	1.02
1911	1.17
1921	1.17
1931	1.16
1951	0.78
1961	0.56
1971	0.05
1981	0.05
1991	0.05

Pariahs in the Organised Sector

The Workmen's Compensation Act 1923

- Payment of Wages Act
- Minimum Wages Act
- Maternity Benefit Act
- Payment of Gratuity Act
- The Employees State Insurance Act

The tragic paradox of women's labour in the organised sector is their highly visible presence as contract/casual labour within the public sector mines. When employing women as daily wage labourers or bonded labourers, to perform the same tasks, their dress does not become a hindrance to the mining companies. When one passes through the stretches of coal mines or iron ore mines in Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand and Orissa, one witnesses women

labourers by the thousands employed in head loading, stone breaking, cleaning and other forms of daily wage labour where they are entirely at the mercy of petty contractors and have absolutely no work safety or security.

Women workers in the organised sector have bitter experiences of trying to fight for minimum wages, paid leave during illnesses or pregnancies, improved working conditions, etc. Even when they are members of trade unions, they have found it difficult to make the issues concerning women workers a priority issue for negotiations with the management. Technical jobs are never given to women or any efforts made to train them for skilled activities either by the companies or the unions. Women are prohibited from applying for professional courses in mineral sciences or engineering which are a prerogative of the men alone.

In the organised sector, they have been the first to be retrenched after mechanisation was introduced. The largescale mines, which are shifting to technology dependence, have no scope for women's participation as they are illiterate, lack technical skills and face cultural prejudices. Where women formed 30-40% of the workforce in mining, they have been reduced to less than 7% and in the coal sector alone, to 4.05%. Schemes like VRS the golden handshake have proved a death knell to women. The Second National Labour Commission Report states that the percentage of female labour force in the organised sector is 1.6 (1999).

Women are the pariahs of the largescale mines. Their opportunities are only as scavengers or as 'payiris' as they are termed in Spanish, within the organised sector. Women living in mining communities eke out their livelihood by scavenging on the tailings and wastes dumps, often illegally, and are constantly harassed by company guards, local mafia or police. They are at the mercy of local traders for selling their ores. As they are occupied in 'illegal' mining activities, any accidents like mine collapse where they are killed or disabled, are most often hushed up by the families themselves for fear of police action or the company's wrath.

As Janaki Nair reports on her study of Kolar Gold Fields, "A gold mine has no official place for women, at least in underground work." "Several hundred women are engaged in a variety of jobs related to the mines: retrieving gold, pieces of metal, or coal from disused mill sites and cyanide heaps. They make the best of a mining town that has turned inhospitable."

Whether in the coal mines or gold or iron-ore or bauxite, where women have been displaced in large numbers, justice towards them in providing employment opportunities has never been considered where 'women's interests are subsumed into wider interests' and they have never been identified as 'a distinct group of stakeholders' as found in the field researchers of the mining companies themselves.

Average Daily Employment in Factories by Broad Age Groups, Sex and Industrial Workers :

	Adults	Male	Female
Extraction of Crude Petroleum, Production of Natural Gas	1993	27	Nil
Mining of Iron Ore	1991	14	
Mining of Non-Metallic Minerals not elsewhere classified	1991	63	14
	1992	370	9
	1993	317	6
Other Mining	1981	272	11
	1986	68	6
	1991	16	Nil
	1992	4	2
	1993	20	4

The Small Scale Mines - The only resort for women

In the unorganised sector they are forced to work beyond work hours, even in advanced stages of pregnancy, have no leave or creche facilities, and are always under threat of being thrown out. In some of the quarries in Orissa, women are forced to work at night and are used for sexual abuse so much so that young girls from these regions are branded as 'spoilt' and not respectable for marriage. In the stone crushers, most women have tuberculosis and so are their infants who are brought to the work place and left to fend for themselves in the quarrying sites while their mothers are working. Even this work is only seasonal.

State Wise Distribution of Female Main Workers in Mining and Quarrying as per 1991 Census

States	
Andhra Pradesh	42,354
Arunachal Pradesh	2
Assam	1,395
Bihar	22,256
Delhi	1,330
Goa	3,248
Gujarat	7,987
Haryana	570
Himachal Pradesh	75
Karnataka	23,655
Kerala	13,593
Madhya Pradesh	22,562
Maharashtra	16,740
Manipur	53
Meghalaya	725
Mizoram	27
Nagaland	26
Orissa	18,438
Punjab	3
Rajasthan	15,375
Sikkim	29
Tamil Nadu	11,646
Tripura	112
West Bengal	8,953
Uttar Pradesh	3,002

Union Territories	
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	137
Chandigarh	6
Dadra and Nagar Haveli	30
Daman & Diu	24
Lakshadweep	Nil
Pondicherry	3

The mining companies bring in cheap migrant labour, mostly male and sometimes female. Both types of women - those women who are originally from the mining area and those women who come as migrants are equally vulnerable to the exploitation of the company staff, contractors, migrant male population and from the males within the communities who get highly influenced by the new social evils of external societies. The women mine workers are vulnerable to diseases like HIV AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases. There is a growing situation of unwed women as mothers, deserted women who are further humiliated and forced into giving in to the demands of the males in order to retain their wage labour in the mines and to bring up their offsprings.

While the largescale mining has no space for women, the small-scale sector absorbs them only as contract or bonded labour under highly exploitative conditions. Wages are always less than those for men, they do not get a paid holiday even one day in a week or during pregnancy or childbirth, no work equipment is provided, there are no toilets or work facilities. The women are exposed to the exploitation, physical and sexual, of the mine-owners, contractors and other men. They have to walk back miles to return to their villages and are vulnerable to assault on the way.

Occupational Hazards of Women Miners

The women working in the mines suffer from several occupational illnesses right from respiratory problems, silicosis, tuberculosis, leukemia, arthritis, to reproductive problems. They work with toxic and hazardous substances without any safety.

Whereas women could take their infants to the fields or to the forest earlier, women working in mines have to leave their children behind at homes, unattended. If they do manage to take the children, they have to expose them to high levels of dust and noise pollution, are susceptible to accidents due to blasting or falling into mine pits while playing, etc. The companies do not provide any facilities for their children like crèches or attendants to look after them except at the time of inspection when officials from the labour department visit them. Such inspections are a mere eye-wash as the officials are highly susceptible to bribes and rarely report the companies' poor working conditions and neither do they take any punitive action.

Most of the tribal and rural women working in the mines are seasonal workers as they also work as agricultural labourers. This is because most of the land is lost for mining and makes it difficult for them to get a sustained living from agriculture or from the forests. Neither is the work in the mines regular for the women, and therefore, keeps them shifting between occupations. This gives the mining companies ample opportunity not to provide minimum wages or permanent labour in the mines as they can blame the workers for irregularity of attendance.

Very few workers work till the 'retirement' age as a few years of labour in the mines, leaves them with terminal illnesses or debilitations which make them unfit for any kind of labour. When they leave the mines, they have no pensions or provident funds given by the companies. On the other hand, at the time of dropping out of work they are left with heavy debts due to repeated illnesses, medical expenses, unpaid holidays taken due to sickness, other domestic expenses which overshoot their incomes due to the low wages earned, etc. In order to pay up, they introduce their minor children into the mine workforce, thereby getting tangled into the vicious trap of unending mine labour for the next generations.

Retrenchment and Closure : Pushing women into more vulnerable forms of labour

It is also observed that where mining activities are abandoned and companies begin to scale down their operations, the men move over to other forms of occupations and it is here that mainly women are employed. The companies try to take the left over ore from the debris and tailings by providing wage labour to women for sifting, collecting, cleaning and loading activities. Also, when most of the men employed in the mines have died or are too ill to work in the mines any more, their widows and wives are given replacement of the jobs, usually in order to pay up the debts taken by the men. The women are well aware that their lives and health are equally short-lived, yet have no choice but to continue working in the mines. A very good example of this situation is seen in the Mica mines of Gudur in Andhra Pradesh and in the stone quarries of Rajasthan.

Mine closure always sounds a death knell to the lives of the miners and their families. In most situations, companies rarely have a mine-closure plan which is less distressful to its employees. Whether the companies are involved in down sizing labour for mechanization or for shutting down the company entirely, it is the women who first face the axe. Where families are dependent wholly on the male member's salaries or wages, retrenchment hits women the hardest. While the laid off men are occupied in negotiations, strikes and legal battles with their companies and unions, the loss of income leads to a highly critical

situation for their families. The uncertainty and idleness drags men into depression, alcoholism and many times, to suicide.

It is the women who have to take over the responsibility of keeping the families out of starvation. Women who may not have been used to any form of physical labour in the past are suddenly forced to look out for work, whether land based or in the service sector. They go out of their homes to work as domestic workers, farmhand labour, factory workers, maid-servants, or take up petty trades. Desperation also forces them into prostitution in post-mining conditions. Children are pulled out of school as the miners' no longer can afford to pay their school fees and put them into menial jobs as cleaners in hotels, assistants in mechanic sheds, cycle repair shops, etc, for supporting their families.

Child Labour

A more serious social hazard is the employment of child labour in mining. They are cheap labour for the unorganized sector like in quarrying, stone crushing units, marble and masonry stone mining, transporting, head loading, stone breaking, and in some of the processing industries like marble products, slate industry, diamond cutting, etc. They often get into the mine labour force to supplement the low incomes of their families, to pay up the debts and as bonded labourers. As they are not in the official payrolls of the companies, the wages they receive are entirely dependent on the unscrupulous managers, supervisors and contractors who are 'kind' enough to hire them. While under 'training' they do not receive any wages and the period of training is left to the vagaries of the mine owner. In reality studies have shown that child labourers work faster and contribute better outputs but are paid no wages or inhuman wages. They are often physically, mentally and sexually abused and in India, where labour laws are lax, the government closes its eyes to the abuses of child workers while mining companies whether small scale or multinational escape all their crimes of child abuse.

The diamond mining industry, for example, employs a large section of child labour for its cutting and polishing industry. The condition of workers *hiravalas* in the 'sweat-shops' of the diamond cutting industry in India are tales of horror. Young persons between the ages of 18-25 who are mostly migrant labourers from the surrounding rural areas are taken in and are hired under extreme work conditions dark ill ventilated rooms, highly degrading, poor wages, etc. Many young children and girls are employed for the nimbleness required in diamond cutting. The total wage rates amount to only 1% of the total cost of production of diamonds. Even global corporates like Rio Tinto and De Beers with all their declarations of respecting human rights, continue to purchase diamonds from India where child labour in diamond cutting and polishing is flourishing.

When such is the lack of interest or responsibility of large mining industries, the thousands of small mines which employ child labourers escape without punishment and in spite of all the widely reported stories of abuses on child labourers in the mining industry, they continue to be victimized. While the larger companies acquit themselves of these abuses on children by blaming our governments for not enforcing or monitoring labour laws strictly, the small companies silently escape with money and might at the local levels.

Conclusions and Critical Issues concerning women and labour in mining

When we look at a macro level of the economic context of gender in mining there are only two options for women in the present reality. They are accepted only in the small scale mines where our corrupt governments and irresponsible companies cannot be brought to book. Hence they have to live with the

exploitation and discrimination even if protective the laws and policies towards women and children are brought into force. Secondly, they have barely any space in the large scale public/ private/transnational led mines which is inclusive of only males and machines. The mining industry's position on this issue is clearly reflected in the MMSD report which states how companies have tried to address the needs of women by providing neo-natal care or by helping establish community banks for small businesses.

The basic question here is, after completely throwing women out of their economic and livelihood roles for the sake of mining, how many women can be accommodated in this manner of providing small development incentives and schemes (which are also largely dependent on the 'magnanimity' of the company in working towards social responsibility) and in how many places can such experiments be replicated whereas, in land based traditional occupations, women had a basic economic position which was not given as a favour but is an important part of a larger economic situation where women are inclusive and without whose labour and contribution, the economy cannot be carried forward.

Some of the key issues on women and labour in mining are

- Mining is a male dominated industry and is hostile to women's work participation in the mining sector.
- Privatization has shown negative impacts on women mine workers it has led to more VRS, retrenchment and more women have been pushed into contract labour which completely lacks work safety and employment security. The labour statistics of the Ministry of Labour are clear indicators in the steady fall of women's labour participation in the minerals sector
- Most women mine workers are found in small scale mines and informal/unorganized sector mines where mining companies easily escape monitoring, have very poor checks on them in all spheres whether implementation of labour rules and regulations, mine safety rules, environment protection or waste management all of which have direct impact on women and child labourers working in the mines.
- Most largescale private mining industries are highly mechanised and technology intensive which exclude women's participation in the workforce
- The incomes drawn by women as mine workers is economically and physically unsustainable and drags them into deeper indebtedness and bonded labour
- Lack of responsibility of mining companies towards protecting and ensuring proper health care for women mine workers has serious consequences on their health, both physical and reproductive which is a serious human rights violation by both companies and our governments.
- The economic roles played by women have to be studied in comparison between mining and pre-mining situations in order to draw perspectives on the economics of mining from a gender perspective
- The new mineral policy states the first right of priority for local communities for obtaining mining leases. Yet when communities apply for prospecting or for mining leases, which have women in their cooperatives or societies, they have most often been rejected.
- Labour laws have to incorporate and implement the legitimate participation of women in the public and formal sector mining and increase employment opportunities for women.
- Mechanization cannot take place at the cost of women, as it is women who are displaced from their lands for mining and not machines.

- An important question that cannot be ignored is, when our governments are not in a position to enforce laws related to women and child labourers, who takes the responsibility of monitoring and correcting the human rights abuses and low income levels of women and children in the mining sector?
- If mining has to take place, the policy has to seriously ensure improvement on the work safety, security and sustainability issues of women workers in mining. This means our economic policies have to first put into priority addressing the education, livelihoods, health, political participation, legal entitlements to lands, natural resources and employment opportunities for women.
- If mining has to take place, women from the affected communities should have equal opportunity for employment as the men since they equally lose their lands and traditional livelihoods when the mines come. India needs to provide a constitutionally legitimate R&R policy for all mining projects in the country which also seriously addresses this issue of women's labour.
- Before sanctioning of mining projects, the state should have a proper long term plan and assessment of the cost benefits of mining projects from the perspective of labour and livelihoods vis-à-vis pre-mining economies of the local communities and not merely make assessments based on macro indicators of economic growth like GDP. In other words, there should be a people-centred (which includes gender-centred) economic plan and not a market centred one particularly, in the context of mining.

Presentations

J. John

J. John is the Executive Director of Centre for Education and Communication. CEC works on labour issues and brings out a periodical 'Labour File' that covers labour issues in the organized and, norganized sector in India. J. John spoke on the status of women's employment in the mining sector in India.

Women in Mining as Workers

Segmented, Excluded and Discriminated Women as the worst victims of mining

Extraction of fuel, metallic, non-metallic and minor minerals require land. It results in loss of agricultural land, loss of livelihood, food security, pollution and environmental degradation. Since mining companies mostly do the acquisition of land against the wishes of the occupants; it results in major violations of human rights. In some cases, mining has serious effects on the health of the people living in the vicinity. Burden on women increases multi-fold in such situations, in which she, beyond the child rearing responsibilities play the role of the bread winner, fetch fuel and water from faraway places and take care of the sick and elderly.

Women as workers in mining

Women are involved in mining as workers and self-employed. This will be the area that we will be exploring today. We will be looking at issues like (a) where are they working? (b) what are the conditions under which they work? (c) has there been any change in the employment in mining, if so what is the change? (d) are their work recognized? (e) how women workers in mines could be seen as part of women workers in India.

From where to get the information

We get information on women mineworkers from stories of struggle, case studies, newspaper reports, specific academic studies, etc. It is difficult to make generalizations, as most of it would be done from individualized perspectives. But gives valid and very relevant qualitative information.

We also get information from government sources. What are these sources? Census, NSSO surveys, ASI, Economic Census, EMI, Departmental Information, Standardized scientific and rigorous method. Generalization possible and used for governmental policies.

Where are the Women mine workers

- Very few women employed in various departments of Mines, Government of India
- Women only 4.1% of the combined strength
- Representations of women in geological survey are very poor 3.09% of total employees.
- Concentration of women in non-gazetted section. Mainly secretaries and clerks.

Women in Public Sector

Women in Four Major Public Enterprises in Mining

	Total Employees	Women	Percentage of Women
NALCO	6549	Low	3.18
Hindustan Zinc Ltd (HZL)	8357	266	
Hindustan Copper Ltd (HCL)	9539	Low	
Mineral Exploration Corporation Limited (MECL)	2560	Low	

Source : Annual Report 2002, Department of Mines, GoI

- In most of the Public/enterprises, employment of women is not even worth mentioning; the case in which it is mentioned (HZL), it is only 3.18% of the total employment.

Let us understand a little more on mineral industry

The national mineral sector recorded a positive growth (1.07 per cent) during the period April 2001-December 2001, as compared to the corresponding period in 2000-2001. The Index of Mineral Production (Base 1993-94=100) for the period April 2001-December 2001 for all minerals was higher by 1.07 per cent, primarily on account of a positive growth of 3.22 per cent in the coal and lignite section and a positive growth of 4.86 per cent in the non-fuel major minerals. The total value of minerals production (excluding atomic minerals) during 2001-2002 is estimated to be Rs.57,041 crore, which shows an increase of 0.41 per cent over that of the previous year. During 2001-2002, fuel minerals have accounted for Rs.47,495 crore or 83 percent, metallic minerals Rs.3,920 crore or 7 percent and non-metallic minerals (including minor minerals) Rs.5,626 crore or 10 percent of the total value.

Export and Imports

The value of export of ores and minerals during 1999-2000 was Rs.32,752 crore. Diamond (mostly cut) was the principal item of export during 1999-2000, which accounted for 85 percent, followed by granite with a contribution of 5 percent, iron ore with contribution of 4 percent and precious and semi-precious stones comprising 2 percent. Marble, chromite and emerald were the other important minerals exported during the year 1999-2000.

The value of import of ores and minerals during 1999-2000 was Rs.71,878 crore, Petroleum (crude) was the main constituent of mineral export during 1999-2000 which accounted for 57 percent of the total value of import of ores and minerals followed by diamond (uncut) with 32 percent. Coal, rock phosphate and copper ore and concentrates were other important minerals imported during 1999-2000.

Mineral Production : Mineral Production in India 1999-2000 to 2001-2002 (By Mineral Groups)

Mineral	1999-2000		2000-2001		2001-2002	
	No. of Mines	Value (Rs. 000)	No. of Mines	Value (Rs. 000)	No. of Mines	Value (Rs. 000)
All Minerals	3210	523066212	3173	587728570	3078	565092829
Fuel Minerals	611	426761654	596	478436320	596	485415801
Met. Minerals	572	35504677	565	37373435	555	35062176
Non-Met. Minerals	2027	18535042	2012	20347760	927+	19983997
Minor Minerals	-	42264339		51571056		31671055

Indian Bureau of Mines <http://ibm.nic.in/frames.html>
+Annual Report 2002, Department of mines, GoI

State wise Distribution of Mining

All India Distribution of Mining Leases (As on 31/3/2001) Statewise

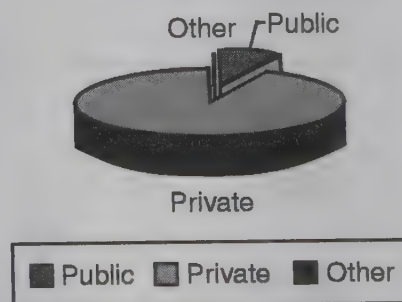
Sl. No.	State Code	State	Top No. of Leases	Leases %	Lease Area (Hectares)	Lease Area %
1	APR	Andhra Pradesh	1707	18.30	56459.11	8.57
2	ASM	Assam	20	0.21	1487.69	0.25
3	BHR	Bihar	98	1.05	7552.36	1.15
4	CHG	Chattisgarh	234	2.51	31850.68	4.64
5	DEL	Delhi	5	0.05	499	0.08
6	GOA	Goa	395	4.23	30304.63	4.60
7	GUJ	Gujarat	1428	15.31	31810.5	4.75
8	HPR	Himachal Pradesh	63	0.57	3088.66	0.47
9	HRN	Haryana	134	1.44	15866.29	2.41
10	J&K	Jammu & Kashmir	20	0.21	1616.64	0.25
11	JHK	Jharkhand	332	3.56	40631.56	6.17
12	KAR	Karnataka	610	6.54	72153.39	10.95
13	KRL	Kerala	114	1.22	2394.54	0.36
14	MAN	Manipur	2	0.02	610.17	0.09
15	MEG	Meghalaya	20	0.27	4062.69	0.62
16	MPR	Madhya Pradesh	1123	12.04	35096.62	5.33
17	MSH	Maharashtra	234	2.51	17587.28	2.67
18	ORI	Orissa	605	6.48	99087.74	15.04
19	RAJ	Rajashtan	1299	13.92	141154.5	21.43
20	SKM	Sikkim	3	0.03	38	0.01
21	TMN	Tamil Nadu	669	7.17	43660.01	6.68
22	UPR	Uttar Pradesh	97	1.04	6716.21	1.02
23	UTL	Uttaranchal	52	0.56	2754.5	0.42
24	WBL	West Bengal	76	0.81	12420.76	1.89
TOTAL			9330	100.00	658742.76	100.00

Mining Leases

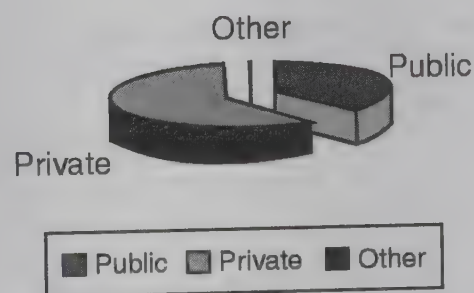
Sectorwise - All India Distribution of Mining Leases (As on 31/3/2001)

Sector	No. Of Leases	%	Top Lease Area	%
Public	650	6.97	247587.1	37.58
Private	8678	93.01	411098.4	62.41
Other	2	0.02	57.26	0.01
Sum	9330		658742.8	

No. of Leases (31-3-2001)



Top Lease Area (31-3-2001)



Women's Work in Macro Data

For this we have to understand, briefly, the structure of Indian Workforce

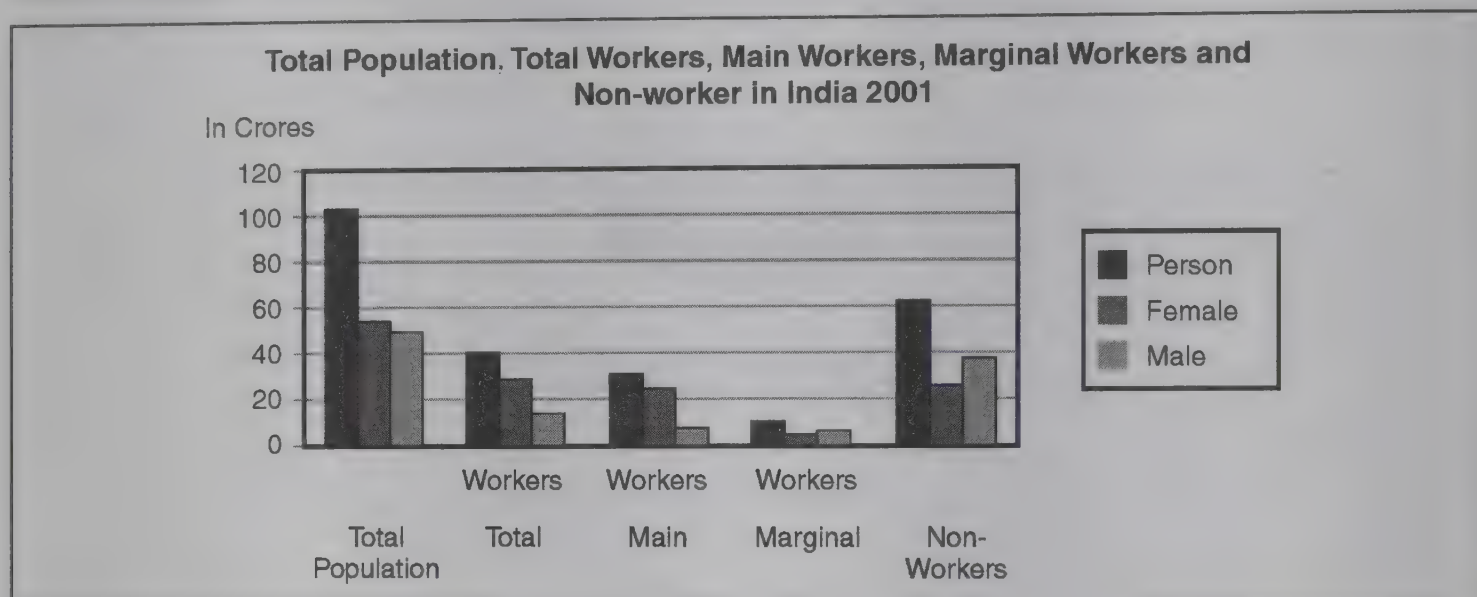
Women workers in Census 2001

Total population, total workers, marginal workers and non-workers- India : 2001
(Provisional) Persons

	Total Population	Total Workers	Main Workers	Marginal Workers	Non-Workers
Persons	1,025,251,059	402,512,190	313,173,394	89,338,796	622,738,869
Male	530,422,415	275,463,736	240,520,672	34,943,064	254,958,679
Female	494,828,644	127,048,454	72,652,722	54,395,732	367,780,190
% Of females to total	48.26	31.56	23.20	60.89	48.26

Notes: The figures for India and Gujarat exclude the data for the entire Kachchh district, Morvi, Maliya-Miyana and Wankaner talukas of Rajkot district, Jodiya taluka of Jamnagar district of Gujarat State where population enumeration of Census of India, 2001 could not be conducted due to earthquake.

Source : Census 2001



Main Workers in Mining and Quarrying

Main Workers by Industrial Sectors and Sex (1981 & 1991)

Industrial Category	% of Females to Total Females	
	1981	1991
Cultivators	33.09	34.22
Agricultural Labourers	46.34	44.93
Livestock, forestry, etc	1.83	1.6
Mining and Quarrying	0.35	0.34
Manufacturing in Household	4.57	3.53
Manufacturing in other than Household	3.6	3.88
Construction	0.87	0.66
Trade & Commerce	2.04	2.26
Transport & Communications	0.37	0.32
Other Services	6.94	8.26
Total	100	100

Source : Women Workers' Rights in India: Issues and Strategies, ILO, 1999.

Mine Workers in NSSO Data

Industrial Distribution of workers (usual status) by sex, 1972-73 to 1993-94 (percentage)

Industry	1972-73	1977-78	1983	1987-88	1993-94	1999-00
Agriculture	73.9	71	68.6	65	64.7	60.3
Mining & Quarrying	0.4	0.4	0.60.6	0.7	0.7	0.6
Manufacturing	8.8	10.2	10.7	11.1	10.5	11
Electricity, gas & water	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.3
Construction	1.9	1.7	3.8	3.8	3.2	4.4
Trade	5.1	6.1	7.2	7.2	7.4	10.3
Transport & storage	1.8	2.1	2.6	2.6	2.8	3.7
Services	7.9	8.1	9.3	9.3	10.3	9.6
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Male						
Agriculture	68.8	65.6	62.6	58.7	58.3	53.5
Mining & Quarrying	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.9	0.7
Manufacturing	9.9	11	11.7	11.9	11	11.4
Electricity, gas & water	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.4
Construction	2.1	2.2	2.9	4.2	4.0	5.6
Trade	6.5	7.8	8	9.2	9.5	13
Transport & storage	2.6	3.1	3.6	3.9	4.0	5.2
Services	9.3	9.4	10.6	10.8	11.7	10.2
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Female						
Agriculture	84.3	81.8	81.2	77.7	78	75.3
Mining & Quarrying	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.3
Manufacturing	6.6	8.5	8.9	9.5	9.3	10
Electricity, gas & water	-	-	-	-	-	-
Construction	1.3	0.8	1	2.8	1.2	1.6
Trade	2.3	2.8	2.7	3.1	3.2	4.2
Transport & storage	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.3
Services	5.1	5.7	5.5	6.2	7.6	8.2
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

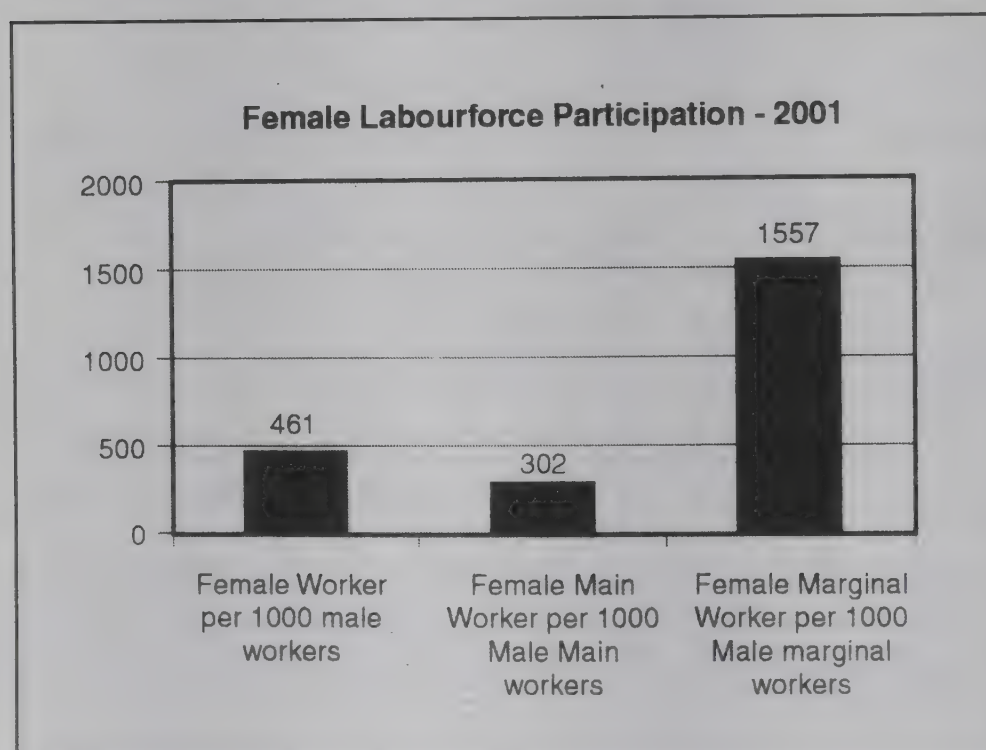
Source: Pravin Visaria 1996, Structure of the Indian Workforce, in the Indian Journal of Labour Economics, The Indian Society of Labour Economics, New Delhi, Vol 39, No 4, October- December, p 731. NSS 2001, Employment and Unemployment Situation in India 1999-2000. Part I, NSS 55th Round. Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, GoI, p-120 and 122.

Female Labour Participation

Female Labour force Participation (1901-2001)

Year	Female Workers as % of Female Population	Male Workers as % of Male Population	Population Ration of Females per 1000 males	Female Worker per 1000 male workers	Female Main Worker per 1000 Male Main workers	Female Marginal Worker per 1000 Male marginal workers
1901	31.7	61.11	972	504		
1911	33.73	61.9	964	525		
1921	32.67	60.52	955	516		
1931	27.63	58.27	950	450		
1951	23.31	54.04	946	408		
1961	27.93	57.12	941	460		
1971	14.22	52.75	930	215		
1981	19.67	52.62	934	6367		
1991	22.27	51.61	927	400		
2001	25.68	51.93	933	461	302	1557

Source : Women Worker's Rights in India: Issues and Strategies, ILO, 1999 and Census 2001



Mine Workers and Women in Economic Census

According to the Economic Census 1998, establishments owned by 'private others' employed 32.86 million persons forming 66.2% of the total employment in all non-agricultural establishments. 'Government' and 'cooperative societies' absorbed 28.5% and 2.65 workers respectively.

Number of Persons usually working in Non-agricultural Establishments by Major Activity Groups

Sl. No.	Major Activity Group				(Number in '00)		
		Total			Hired		
		Total Employees	Female	Child	Total Employees	Female	Child
1	Mining & Quarrying	4529	729	42	4291	702	37
2	Manufacturing	154813	26743	4311	132718	23574	3501
3	Electricity, Gas & Water	4277	227	3	4237	226	2
4	Construction	4926	735	126	4195	684	105
5	Wholesale Trade	13466	1202	207	9932	1066	167
6	Retail Trade	73610	6116	2897	50342	4521	2444
7	Restaurants & Hotels	19139	1721	1174	14211	1221	1037
8	Transport	11946	692	111	10204	640	84
9	Storage & Warehousing	2275	190	20	1945	176	17
10	Communications	6947	974	26	6479	936	21
11	Financial, insurance, real estate & business services	25107	3817	204	22472	3658	164
12	Community, Social & Personal Services	175591	36133	1522	162662	34868	1174
13	Other (unspecified) activities	18	3	1	13	2	1
	All non-agricultural activities	496645	79283	10646	423702	72273	8756

Note : Number total may not tally with the all Non-agricultural activities due to rounding off.

Source: Economic Census 1998, Table 4.12

Nature of Women's Employment

Women's Access to Employment

- Reserve Army of Labour
- Cheap Labour Reserve
- Segmented Labour Market
- Constraints within family
- Constraints from Community
- Issues of Mobility

In the Labour Process

- Mostly in the Unorganized Sector
- Displacement- Mechanisation or Rationalisation
- Selective Feminisation
- Segregation based on skills- unskilled and low wage
- Discrimination- gender based unequal remuneration
- Sexual exploitation

Within the Household

- Division of Domestic Labour
- Pooling & Consumption of Income
- Participation in the Decision Making Process

How are there macro realities of Women's Work reflected in Mining?

- Mining-dangerous, dirty, risky and hazardous job
- The special feature of coal mining was the participation of women workers in the labour force, initially as part of a family labour system
- They worked alongside their husbands underground as coal cutters and as Loaders
- Local peasants whose land was alienated
- Immigrants from other places
- Mainly Adivasis
- Lower caste people

Recent Trends

- Exclusion of Adivasi and lower caste women, who participated traditionally from the production process
- The absence of alternative means of livelihood in a viable environment has forced them into scavenging and hence turned them into illegitimate people
- Adivasi women has become invisible to policy makers
- Loss of agricultural land resource base- heightened impact on women workers

Proportion of Women Workers in Eastern Indian Collieries (1901-96)

Year	Female	Male	% of Female to Total
1901	26,520	55,682	47.6
1921	70,831	115,982	61.1
1935	67,899	122,454	55.5
1951	45,668	128,936	35.4
1961	41,457	134,928	30.7
1973	31,181	138,587	22.5
1980	16,094	169,136	9.7
1990	12,875	165,839	7.2
1996	9,879	151,855	6.1

Source : From *Gin Girls to Scavengers : Women I Raniganj Collieries*,
Kunta Lahiri Dutt, EPW November 03, 2001.

- Self-employed
- Casual Day Labourers
- Contract workers

Story of Suraj Kali

Stone and silica mines of Shankergarh about 60km from Allahabad are owned by Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh, an influential landlord, whose mother, Maharani Rajendra Kumari Ba, received the mining lease for 46 villages in 1947. Raja sublets his mines to contractors. the Kols, around 50,000 are hired by these contractors.

Their names are not on voter's lists. They are tortured by contractors. They have been deprived of minimum wages and are steeped in debt. They have been bonded to the contractors.

A Kol family of five earns around Rs.250 for mining one tractor-trolley of silica for a contractor. If they had their own contract, it would fetch Rs.650. Similarly, for cutting one lorry of stone chips, a family gets Rs.300 for a contractor. They would get Rs.1,200 if they had a direct contract.

Suraj Kali, with other women labourers, formed a "self-help" group and they captured 15 mines on December 9 and 10, 2001.

Labour Laws

Mine workers in India are covered under the Mines Act, 1952, which intends to regulate the working conditions in mines by providing for measures to be taken for the safety of the workers employed therein and certain amenities for them. It was amended in 1983 to bring all personnel engaged solely on work relating to mines within the scope of the Mines Act. For similar reasons it intends to bring within the scope of the Mines Act, power stations, which generate power, used wholly in connection with the mine concerned. The definition of the term, "mine" has been broadened to include quarries and open cast working and also private railways, aerial ropeways, conveyors, etc.

It shows that till 1983, workers engaged in the over-ground activities and related activities were not covered under the Mines Act, 1952. Strangely, a clause of exception is incorporated in the amended act to the effect that subject to certain conditions the Act (excepting a few provisions) shall not apply to excavations made for prospecting purposes only and to small quarries. Subject to certain provisions, specifically any mine engaged in the extraction of kankar, murrum, laterite, boulder, gravel, shingle, ordinary clay (excluding moulding sand, glass sand and other mineral sands), ordinary clay (excluding kaolin, china clay, white clay or fire clay), building stone, (State), road metal, earth, fuellers earth, (marl chalk) and limestone have been removed from the purview of the Act, This leaves out a very large segment of the workers employed in small private mines from the benefits of the Act.

Ms. Pallavi Rege

Ms. Pallavi introduced Ms. Dagadabai Pawar and Ms. Mangalbai Rajguru, the women stone workers from Maharashtra. Together they presented the problems of the women stone workers in Pune.

Ms. Dagadabai Pawar said that the women workers work in loading the stones in the tractors and their average earning is between Rs.30 to Rs.40 a day. Working in the mines is the only option available to these women to earn income and support their families. The men are heavily addicted to alcohol and in majority of the cases spent their spouse's income too in spent on alcohol. There is no economic or social security for the women mineworkers.

Absolutely no compensation was given by the company in the event of death or accidents due to work in the mines. They sited instances where the deaths were not reported and how the company procured false medical reports and avoided responsibility towards the whole incident. They totally eluded responsibility and do not even inform the workers homes in the event of death. The mining companies have strong nexus between the police and local governments that is extremely difficult to break. This helps the mining company to further exploit the workers. It was only due to constant struggles and attempts to break this nexus that ensured compensation of Rs. two lakh for compensation in a particular case of mine accident due to the company's negligence.

Ms. Dagadabai Pawar then spoke about the problems of housing in their areas. Most of the people working in this area have migrated from earthquake-affected areas. They have settled on land belonging to the government. But the people from the main villagers complained to the local district administration. The mineworkers lobbied for their rights, formed an organization and represented their case to the district administration. This resulted in a positive response towards the workers.

Ms. Dagadabai Pawar then recounted the social initiatives of Santulan and how it has changed their community completely. They have now initiated a day care and school where their children are taken care off when the mothers are at work. The women have realized the importance of literacy and Adult literacy programmes have been initiated. Realising that alcoholism is one of the major causes of problems the women took initiatives and carried out a movement against alcohol. This movement showed positive results and the men have changed their lifestyle completely. They too have realized the importance of literacy and actively take part in Santulan's initiatives. She stated that Santulan has empowered the women to form savings groups and initiated women's associations to serve as a platform to address social issues.

In presenting these examples, Ms. Dagadabai Pawar highlighted the different struggles in their areas and how the workers have come together to demand for their rights. To conclude she said that the only way by which mine workers could demand for their rights is through collective action.

Mr. K Rajendra Kumar

Mr. Rajendra and his team represented the struggle group Sujana, Andhra Pradesh. Mr. Rajendra works with the stone crushers and mine workers in East Godavari District. He gave an overview of the problems of the stone quarry workers in his district.

Mr. Rajendra spoke about the plight of the stone crushers in East Godavari district. He stressed that as the stone crushers largely belonged to the unorganized sector, they do not have any legal support. He said that diseases such as TB, Silicosis, etc is highly rampant among the stone crushers and no action is taken towards curbing it. The disability rate and death rate too is high among the stone crushers and quarry workers. When the cases were reported to the local government they turn a blind eye.

In order to make the political parties and the local governments sensitive to their plight, during election time they wrote their complaints and placed it in the ballot box. The Election Commission responded to these complaints and sought explanations from the Zilla Parishads and local government. The Zilla Parishad initiated some activities as an initial response to this but it has been taken up completely.

To conclude he emphasized the need and importance of mm&P as a national alliance to address these issues at a national level.

Ms. Lakshmi, a representative from Sujana further highlighted on the issues of stone crushers in her district. She emphasized on the severe health problems caused due to working in the mines. She said that there were absolutely no medical facilities available and workers could less afford the cost of taking the ill to the hospital. Thus workers neglect their health problems, which often resulted in dismal situations.

Mine Labour Protection Campaign (MLPC)

Representatives from MLPC, Rajasthan gave glimpses of their hazardous working conditions and presented issues of women mineworkers in Soapstone mines at Kaloda, Udaipur, and Rajasthan. Women were employed in collecting the mined mineral and loading it in dumpers for which they are paid a meager sum of Rs.32 per day. In some areas, the women operate 300ft underground, just tied to a rope on their heads. Absence of toilets, working equipment and safety measures- such as mufflers, shoes, helmets, etc has made it increasingly difficult to work. They work in such conditions for 8-10 hours in a day in the mines. The average age of the women mine workers is between 16-32 years and they constitute 35% of the workforce.

The mine workers are not permitted to take an off even once a week. Majority of the women mineworkers suffer from respiratory and thoracic problems, anemia and early aging. Silicosis and tuberculosis cases are quite common. The infants of the workers too succumb to health problems associated with mines.

To conclude she emphasized that woman mineworkers in Rajasthan are doomed to a shattered, destitute life, widowhood, molestation, and prostitution. The onset of mining has left them with no respite,

and destroyed their original livelihood- agriculture. Further, the environmental effects of mining have left no scope for any other source of livelihood. The tribals are totally dependent on the mines. The least the government or the company could then do is to have safe working conditions and implement the labour laws to check exploitation at the hands of the mine owners.

The women mine workers from Rajasthan gave a personal account of their lives inside the mine-pits and the serious health and economic problems they face due to their occupation. They were mostly casual labourers, some of them bonded labourers too. They gave a vivid description of their work. They explained how they have to go down 300 feet by rope into the mine-pits along with the men. Once they are inside the mine-pits they cannot come out until five or six in the evening when the day's work is completed. They have no water, food, shade or toilet facilities once they are inside the mine-pits. They suffer tremendous mental and physical discomfort during menstrual cycles. They are vulnerable to mine accidents during blasting, dumping or crushing. They lose their eye-sight, limbs, or even their lives without being compensated or even given proper medical treatment. They have chronic and terminal diseases but continue to work in the mines.

This was the first time that they got an opportunity to pour out their stories of sorrow as nobody showed any concern for the women mine workers.

Session - IV

Issues for policies and Grass-roots struggles in Mining

The last session concluded with sharing of information and experiences of earlier sessions to raise policy issues for seeking alternatives to achieving gender justice within and without mining and to identify areas for lobby and intervention from grass-roots to national platforms. The three main Speakers in this Session were Dr.Sreedhar Ramamoorthy, Mr.Anil Choudhary and Ms.Sunita Dubey.

Mr. Sreedhar Ramamurthy

Mr. Sreedhar started the last session by touching upon the issues that came up in the seminar. He stressed that the alliance has to firstly understand the economic impacts of mining. Indian economy's dependence on mining has to be understood, how much of mining is done for domestic consumption and how much of it for the international markets has to be analyzed. The second question that he raised is, are there limits or can constraints be imposed on the amount to be mined? Mining has to be looked at also from the economic perspective of how much a nation is dependant on mining for economic development and what is the revenue accruing to the state due to mining. Elaborating further, he said that mining might not be justified if viewed from the people's perspective. There are instances where mining is being undertaken purely for the international markets, which has absolutely no benefits for the domestic public or to the local people.

He then pointed out the global influences in the mining industry of the developing economies. 7 companies control 90% of mining in the world. New areas are being explored for mining due to the pressure and lobbying of international players, the investors- investment bankers, multinational companies or banks. There is a huge pressure building up by these giants towards the developing nations for mining, and exploring the markets. Indian states invite mining companies to explore their respective areas. There is a nexus between the local governments, who have vested interests in the multinationals coming to their states as the multinationals speak money and are concerned only with profits. In such a situation the insignificant Adivasis voices go unheard.

The problems due to mining starts with the process of land acquisition. In the case of displacement, the social risks are quite high and are often ignored while calculating the costs associated with the project. Further, as it is the company that calculates the cost and risks, they undermine the real costs. Thus, the costs and benefits to the project are undertaken under whose perspective- whether of the people or the company becomes important. If the company calculates the cost and benefit to the project, then it's chances of calculating all the actual costs / losses is less likely.

He then proceeded to speak about the problems in mines that are in operation. The issues in existing mines are labour rights, workers rights, and trade unions. The other issue is environment and pollution- air and water. The third phase is the closure of mines. Mines close due to the full exploitation of the mineral in that area, or economic unsustainability of the company, typically the public sector units. The process of disinvestments does not acknowledge the rights of the workers in the event of closure of economically unviable mines. In the event of natural closure of mines, even the minimum restoration of the land, and proper closure of mines does not happen. The state has to address the long-term health and environmental impacts of abandoned mines. It has to be ensured that company abides by the environmental laws related to the closure of mines.

He then said that we have to focus on-

- From the perspective of development; what role does mining play in the development process of a nation.
- Mining is done for what purposes?
- Understand that issues in mining differ across the stage of mining, land acquisition, existing mines and mine closure.
- Develop the perspective, to be adopted in issues related to women and mining.
- Sustainable development or Sustainable mining?

Mr. Anil Choudary

Mr. Anil Choudary, Director of PEACE, New Delhi, presented an overview of the politics of mining and the structural powers that influence the mining sector which is closely linked to the global liberal policies on all aspects natural resources and communities in order to win over global markets.

Mr. Anil Choudary made an interesting observation that women's employment in low paid high manual work is increasing. It is observed that women are employed in areas where the labour value is low while the workload is high.

With this observation, he proceeded to talk on mining and economic development of a nation. The approach to development in India is skewed. Mining is considered important for the economic development and building the infrastructure of the nation. Hence for mining activities to take place, certain sections of society, have to be uprooted and displaced. In effect, they have to sacrifice their lives for the development of the nation. India has been following this paradoxical paradigm of development for years.

With liberalization and the entry of foreign players in the mining industry the mineral exploitation for exports has increased. With global markets shrinking, the world players are eying for the limited market opportunities. In this highly capitalist set up with vested interests, the global market is bound to exploit the third world nations. The rich natural resources tapped are not used for domestic consumption but exported to earn foreign revenue. An important question he raised is whether mining is done for domestic consumption or to create wealth. If it is for earning revenues, at the cost of the indigenous people, then it has to be strongly opposed. The tribals, in no way, reap the benefits of mining in their own land. They sacrifice their lives, livelihood and culture for the economic development of the nation, but the benefits of development does not reach them or trickle down.

He stressed that alternatives have to be developed to ensure that the tribals also benefit from mining activities. The government should levy a cess for every year of lease of land for mining, which should directly go for the welfare of the tribals. It would be viewed as a rent paid by the companies to the tribals for mining on their land and encroaching upon their lives. This kind of arrangement would ensure that the tribals also benefit from mining activities.

Ms. Sunita Dubey

Ms Sunita Dubey works with Environment Justice Initiative, New Delhi which is a resource and support organization on issues of natural resources, environment and people's rights. She spoke on the peoples' rights and the laws safeguarding their interests in the event of displacement. She stressed that the affected people have to be aware of the laws that exist to protect their rights. They have to mobilize themselves and strive for the enforcement of the laws. She also spoke on the people's rights (and not the state's) in the decision making process of whether mining should commence in their area or not.

Ms. Sunita spoke on the various legal aspects involved before the commencement of mining in any area. The Environment Assessment Notification Act has a clause that if the lease is greater than 5 hectares it is compulsory to conduct an Environmental Impact Assessment before the commencement of mining activity. The environmental assessment will assess the impact of mining on land, water, air, forests, the environment and the people. Further there has to be a public hearing which has to be conducted involving the people from the affected areas. The decision to mine can be taken only after consultation with the people from the affected areas and with their consent.

She stressed that the people have a right to know and be informed about the environmental impacts of any mining project. The right to decision making should be with the people, and not with the mining company or with the state. To implement this, the struggle groups have to be well informed of the existing laws that empower them and give them the right to decision making. The ultimate decision has to be in the hands of people and not the State. The Ministry of Environment and Forests too has drawn a circular that any project or mining that comes up in the forest area has to take permission of the local people. The local people have the right to oppose the project.

She then quoted a public hearing held in Kasipet, Adilabad district, Andhra Pradesh. Around 600 people from 6 villages had gathered for the public hearing to decide whether mining should commence or not. Government officials, the District Collector and company officials were present. The women openly opposed any kind of mining activity in their area. As they are the worst hit due to mining, the examples they quoted had tremendous impact. The women said that, even if they allowed mining, the companies, after mining, leave the mine pits abandoned, without any attempt at restoring the land or the environment. The impact of mining is long lasting, much beyond the life of the mine. Hence, the women felt that no mining should be allowed in their land. A collective decision was taken that no mining shall be allowed. Thus, if struggle groups interact and educate each other; know about their rights, they can collectively oppose or confront the issues related to exploitation or violations occurring in mining or any other projects in their areas.

Discussions

The last session was followed by discussions where the participants discussed the various issues presented during the two days of the seminar. The participants also discussed the future scenario of mining in India and suggestions were given as to how to bring about the agenda of gender justice in mining in India.

Attempts have to be made to address the legal issues in mining. Adequate training on gender justice and women's issues has to be provided to empower women and enable them to address and raise mining issues themselves.

Dr. Sreedhar posed a question to the mining struggles present as to what should be the direction that the struggle for gender justice in mining should take.

Speaking on the adivasi women, Dr. Ramanika Gupta suggested that women at the village level needs to be totally empowered. Women have to be involved at every stage of mining- during the process of land acquisition, commencement of mining and mine closure. Further, addressing the problems of those women not directly working in the mines but still affected due to mining, she stressed that the Government has to provide some kind of social security for women not working in the mines.

Ms. Durga Jha emphasized the need for the right to participation of women in the mining industry. There are no women mine engineers and women are not allowed to enroll in this sector. While women are the most affected in this industry, they are left out in the decision making process. She suggested that the struggle group has to lobby towards enabling women to enroll in the sector and thus participate in the decision making process.

It was suggested that there should be a policy as far as women and mining is concerned that gives women's right over resources and land.

Ms. Bina Stanis suggested that mm&P should have resources and information about the mining industry, where mining is likely to commence, new struggle groups, names and contacts of important persons in the mining industry that has to be shared with the members which they can fall upon for effective lobbying.

Ms. Bhanumati then said that the group should identify key issues for campaign and lobbying on women in mining.

As women employed in mining do not even earn minimum wages, it was suggested that mm&P has to lobby towards ensuring that the companies pay at least equal minimum wages to the women mineworkers. It was suggested that the group has to demand for regularization of women's labour in mining, especially in the unorganized sector.

Mr. Lahiri made an important point that so far it has come to light that the Ministry of Mines does not address nor acknowledge the gender issue. He suggested that the group could see whether the issues of women and mining can be addressed through other departments that are still gender sensitive, such as that of women and child department, labour department, and the health department. He suggested that the National Commission of Women should investigate the impact of mining on women so that some kind of a dialogue starts with the ministries and steps taken towards lobbying and sensitizing the government. The mineral policy should have a gender policy.

It was decided that a small group would work on the key campaign issues on women and mining based on the experiences shared in the seminar and come up with a Statement on Women and Mining in India.

Summary

Women and Mining in India - Collective Voices from the Mine-pits

The shared experiences of women from different mining regions of the country in the **Seminar on Women and Mining in India** reveals:

Status of Women in the Mining Sector in India

- Mining is a male dominated industry and is hostile to women's work participation in the mining sector.
- Mechanization has retrenched women workers in large numbers reducing female work participation in the mining sector to 6.65%.
- Privatization is the most serious threat to women mine workers in India it has displaced majority of women from formal employment (from 30% to 4% in coal sector alone) in mining sector and pushed them into contract and daily wage labour.
- Women are mostly found as 'scavengers' of mine tailings, petty or 'illegal' waste- ore collectors, and are at the mercy of traders, police, local mining mafia, company guards, contractors and political parties.
- Majority of women mine workers are found in small scale mines and informal/unorganized sector mines where mining companies easily escape monitoring by government and its statutory bodies.
- The incomes drawn by women as mine workers is economically and physically unsustainable and has dragged them into deeper indebtedness and bonded labour
- The working conditions of women mine workers in India are extremely inhuman, insecure, unsafe, hazardous and exploitative-physically, mentally and sexually. No mining companies provide for toilets, drinking water, crèches, rest, medical or other facilities besides forcing women to work in dark and ill-ventilated or ill-sheltered mine sites, besides not providing any work safety equipment or uniforms, minimum daily wages or workers' benefits.
- Laws and rules related to women and child labour are publicly violated by mining companies as our government and its executive wings are highly negligent and corrupt and incapable of ensuring accountability from mining industries
- Lack of responsibility of mining companies towards protecting health and safety of women mine workers has serious consequences on their health, both physical and reproductive.
- Mining companies adopt deceptive tactics such as hiring young women and children to work as cheap labour and retrench them within short periods. This way they ensure that diseases are not detected or traceable to the mining activity and escape accountability to workers for their chronic and fatal illnesses which are associated with the mines. Some serious examples in India are Asbestos mines, quarries and crushers, mica, chromite and manganese where women workers are found in large numbers.
- Women are forced to work in mine-sites where certain minerals have been banned globally as they have been proved to be too hazardous for human exposure. Two dangerous examples in India are Asbestos and Uranium.
- Women working and living in mining regions in India whether coal, iron-ore, mica, bauxite, quarries, cement, asbestos or any others suffer from several illnesses and health hazards right from respiratory

problems, silicosis, tuberculosis, leukemia, arthritis, loss of eye sight, physical and mental deformities due to injuries and mine accidents upto reproductive health problems, anaemia, malnourishment and chronic ill-health.

- Particularly in mining areas which are highly toxic and hazardous like uranium and asbestos, women are giving birth to physically and mentally handicapped children.
- Our governments and the mining industries are deliberately suppressing facts and information related to impacts of mining on women's health as evident from the impact of radiation from uranium mines on women's health in Jaduguda
- Environmental pollution of air, water, land and other resources which exceed permissible limits through emission of toxic wastes and dust and noise, dumping of ill-treated mine tailings, leakage of toxic gases, etc expose women in communities and mine-sites to serious ill-health. A serious example is the situation of coal mines in Jharkhand and pollution of Damodar River.
- New and dangerous health problems like AIDS are growing alarmingly in the mining regions where women are the worst affected.

Land, Displacement, Livelihoods

- Forced shift from agrarian to mining economy has had serious repercussions on livelihoods and economic sustainability of communities, especially dalit and tribal women in India who were completely thrown out of their economic roles and status
- As a consequence, women have been pushed into socially degrading economic livelihoods like domestic, daily wage labour, petty trades, prostitution and the like
- Women in mining regions are being forced to migrate seasonally and face erratic livelihood patterns which constantly shift between mining and non-mining based labour
- Natural resource rich villages have been converted into shanty towns and ugly mining colonies which have degraded the social status of women due to loss of economic roles, external socio-cultural influences and rise in poverty.
- The 'public purpose' of acquisition of lands for mining under the Land Acquisition Act of India is highly questionable from a gender perspective
- Women have no participation in decision making on acquisition of lands, public hearings or Gram Sabhas consultations for mining projects
- Women have no information of projects even at the time of eviction and have no legally recognized rights over lands acquired for mining
- The losses incurred by women as a result of mining whether due to losing lands, homesteads, common properties, forests, livelihoods or social and cultural security, forced migration, breaking up of family and social support systems, degradation of health and nutritional status, increased vulnerability to new forms of exploitation and evils from external populations like alcoholism, wife battering, desertion, polygamy, prostitution, AIDS, violence, etc are never computed within the project costs either while evaluating the costs and benefits of a mining project or while providing rehabilitation and compensation to local communities. Hence, it has proved that women's bodies and needs are dispensable and negotiable commodities when mining policies and projects are introduced in India.

Rehabilitation

- The law does not provide for an R&R policy within the Constitution. Hence Rehabilitation is based on voluntary responses and policies of each mining company/project.
- No mining project in India has provided for a decent and responsible rehabilitation, and least of all a gender sensitive one.
- Rehabilitation colonies do not provide for women's needs of privacy, toilets, washing, water, health, recreation or cultural needs.
- Rehabilitation is provided directly only for men -whether lands, jobs, cash, housing or other forms of compensation
- Hence, women are not eligible for legal claims to loss of lands, forest, common properties, homesteads or livelihoods
- The project requirements of EIA and EMP do not address gender issues in mining projects
- If offered, they are merely superficial incentives or programmes without actually addressing any basic losses related to land, livelihoods and social security.
- Industry is not legally accountable to women in the existing policy framework
- The New Mineral Policy has no mention of gender based rights of communities affected
- The interference of global stakeholders and interest groups like the international financial institutions, especially the World Bank, export credit agencies, international development agencies like CARE in close collusion with the global mining conglomerates lobbying on mineral policies in India has serious negative impacts on ensuring gender justice or in addressing gender concerns. The most live example of gender abuse in the garb of development intervention is the Coal India Project of East Parej (Jharkhand), funded by the World Bank.

Atrocities on Women

- Rural and Adivasi Women who voice their concerns against mining exploitation are being beaten up, threatened and put into illegal custody or booked under false cases when protesting against mining or demanding for rehabilitation
- There is an increasing nexus between industry, police, political powers in intimidating women fighting mining exploitation
- Women from mining struggles, therefore, oppose the entry of private and multinational mining industries interfering in their traditional communities and livelihoods. Women refuse to accept the new modes of gender abuse in the name of corporate engagement especially through dubious community programmes in partnership with development agencies which are arbitrating on behalf of the industry. We have experienced this new form of treachery in Kasipur (Orissa) where CARE has negotiated for Utkal Alumina Project and created communal conflicts leading to grievous injuries and false cases on Adivasi women. We reject the corporate social responsibility practices of the industry as wholly untruthful, treacherous and dangerous to women.

Mining and Sustainability - Gender Concerns

- Hence, sustainability of land, ecology and livelihood in mining is seriously contentious from a gender perspective
- Social and environmental prices paid by communities and nations, for mining projects should be costed within project costs and not as externalities
- Gender Audit of existing and abandoned mining projects should determine their viability and sustainability

Redefining Development Paradigms

- State priorities should shift from merely protecting the profits and sustenance needs of mining industry to welfare of communities, maintaining social justice and sustainability of country's resources.
- There is an urgent need for exploring Sustainable Economic Alternatives to strengthen communities' livelihoods, optimization of natural resources with a strong focus on gender, while addressing consumer needs

Our collective historical experiences in mining in the country convince us that our governments and the mining industry have yet to prove their seriousness to ensuring gender justice in mining. Therefore, we collectively state that:

Declaration of Women in Mining in India

We recognize women are among those worst affected by mining in their various countries. Therefore, it is important to look at the entire mining industry from the perspective of women.

We assert the following from the experiences of women miners, and women in communities affected by mining in India:

- Mining is completely unsustainable for us women and offers no viable opportunities, social nor economic.
- Mining has widespread negative impacts on women's lives in all mining regions of the world.
- Mining industry has no credible measures for preventing the human rights abuses and atrocities on women who work in mines or live in mining affected communities.

Therefore, we oppose

- The entry of any new mining projects.
- The expansion of existing mining projects.
- The provision of various concessions to the mining industry at the cost of local communities.

We demand a moratorium on mining in all areas and particularly in the containing native vegetation and rich biodiversity, particularly from the perspective of gender abuse.

We demand legitimate entitlements for women with regard to land and natural resources. Where mining exists or must continue, we demand equal opportunities for women in the mining sector.

We demand wages and working conditions for women miners which strictly follow international standards and agreements and ensure equality and equity without discrimination based on gender.

We demand for abolition of child labour in all mines.

We demand for an immediate Gender Audit of all mining projects.

We demand urgent action to identify creative pursuits as alternative to mining.

We affirm our right to practise our traditional livelihood systems based on land and forests.

We affirm our right to economic and social progress which enhances the conservation of these resources as opposed to making for their destruction.

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mines, minerals & PEOPLE

An Emerging Alliance

mm&P (mines, minerals & PEOPLE) is a growing alliance of individuals, institutions and communities who are concerned and affected by mining in India. The isolated struggles of different groups have led us to form into broad a national alliance for combating the destructive nature of mining.

mm&P members at present are

- ✓ more than 100 grass-roots groups
- ✓ About 20 diverse support organizations
- ✓ Across 16 states,

With the purpose of

- ✓ Supporting local struggles
- ✓ Legal and media advocacy
- ✓ Information, documation, research and fact finding,
- ✓ Developing campaign strategies
- ✓ Skill share, Jatras, Exchanges
- ✓ National and International networking
- ✓ Technical and Scientific Expertise

Challenges ahead....

- ✓ To bring a uniform and balanced mineral policy
- ✓ Protection of rights of indigenous communities
- ✓ Fight for people's control over mineral resources,
- ✓ Stress for minimum mining
- ✓ Explore better sustainable alternatives to mining
- ✓ Resist environment destruction
- ✓ Monitor global and Indian mining industries.

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